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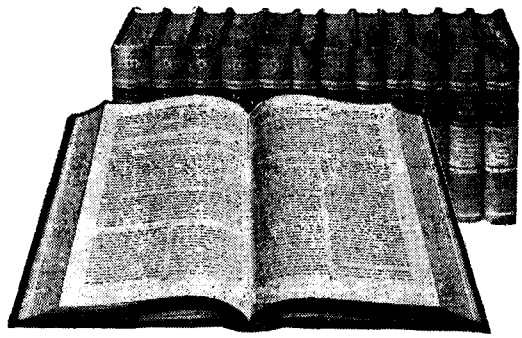

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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The Wonder and the Fear

WE HAVE LOST the sense of wonder. The word itself is no longer used in its old, good, true meaning. It is not only not used; it is scarcely known in this sense. When we say "we wonder," we are expressing doubt mixed with only a little intellectual curiosity. When we say "marvelous" and "miraculous" and "prodigious," we are more often than not referring to some night club singer lately come to bloom on Milton Berle's "stupendous" show, or to the circus in Madison Square Garden, or at the very most to one of the "colossal" productions of Cecil B. de Mille.

Nor is this merely a problem for linguistic scientists, especially not those whose approach to words is mechanistic. What is involved here is the mental and emotional state of those—and they are nearly all of us—who, sinning against the reasonable authority of words, sin more grievously against themselves. We pay for our sins in a loss of mental power, a fatty degeneration of emotional fiber, and a blurring of those insights called spiritual. We pay with gold for what is worth dross and do not realize that we are so impoverished that we do not hesitate an astonished second before switching on the awesome power that brings into our living rooms events occurring three thousand miles away. The sense of the "wonder and divinity" of man is also gone, and with it has vanished the kind of respect that man should deserve, and much of the dignity that his humanity invests him with, and all the charity that he should

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not have to earn. Man's work and workings—converted forces that in themselves should be marvelous to contemplate—no longer awe us as our fathers were awed by the automobile, our grandfathers by the electric light, and our great-grandfathers by the locomotive.

The notion that the increase of knowledge alone has robbed us of the innocence without which wonder cannot flourish is questionable. It implies that learning is the thief of virtue. It implies also a finite end to the acquisition of knowledge. "The more we know, the more there is to know" is a truth that ten thousand years have proved. But equally pertinent now is a sadder truth, "The more we know, the more we *feel the need* to know." This is the rub. It is fear that drives us. Because we have lost our faith in revelation, no new invention, no great discovery, no apocalyptic thought now arouses in us the feeling of "some watcher of the skies, when a new planet swims into his ken." The men who worked on the Manhattan Project had no opportunity and perhaps no wish to stand "silent upon a peak in Darien." The "new planet" will surely have some effect upon our calculations for space ships. On our peak in Darien we submit our equipment to tests and lay claim to the newly found land because we may discover it useful as a base for defensive war. Fear has cast out wonder and converted knowledge into an enemy of mankind. The order, the connecting principle now is fear. All we see in the phenomena of science and the inevitable consequence of events is more cause for fear. One step accomplished, out of compulsive fright we take the next hasty step—from nuclear fission to thermonuclear fission, from calculating machines to cybernetics —for time, we say, is against us. Our dedication is not to the long-range future, but to the short-range present. Thus the scholar's necessary scope is gone, his occupation sullied, and philosophy, the love of knowledge, come to disesteem.

And it is of no use for the scholar to blame non-scholars. He is presently his own worst enemy. For certainly one function of the scholar, neglected here of late, is to teach delight in learning. Whose lectures "sing" now, as William James's were said to sing? Whose sermons "soar" as did John Donne's? Whose talks provoke the "breath-caught laughter of wonderment?" Another function

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proper to the scholar is to extract wisdom from learning, to indicate the best uses to which knowledge can be put, for by virtue of his profession the scholar is a moralist. But lately scholars have left the uses of knowledge to "practical men," have, indeed, let these same practical men decide upon the goals of learning, and have thereby sometimes lent their knowledge to questionable and despotic ends.

If modern scholars are to deserve the name of scholar—of moralist, of humanist, of philosopher—they must begin to show a vital concern with what happens to knowledge, with how it is used and why. The essence of true wisdom is distilled in the conscience. It is time that the scholars' conscience spoke out to the world.

J. Saunders Redding

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Genesis

EDITH STUURMAN

When the last wet lamb was put down in the meadow
the valley was ready; when the finished bird
was cast like a syllable up and out in the sun,
the world seemed as out as a spoken word:
all except man thought the work must be done.
But to him, the explorer, made things were old:
restless and reckless, he crossed his own shadow,
left the world like a ruin for a province like sleep.
He entered new darkness, a world without size,
the dark of its darkness as formless and deep
as a language whose people have never been born.

Who will console him if they are not stirred
into existence? His sandals are worn.
Is he still capable of such surprise
as must have preceded the idea of waking
the earlier sleepers, and the act of making
light out of a word?

✪ EDITH STUURMAN, formerly a lecturer at the University of California, has been granted a Eugene F. Saxton Memorial Fellowship, and is now completing a book of verse for publication.

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The Loss of Confidence

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

IN HISTORY as it comes to be written, there is usually some Spirit of the Age which historians can define, but the shape of things is seldom so clear to those who live them. To most thoughtful men it has generally seemed that theirs was an Age of Confusion, and to some greater or less extent we always belong to a lost generation. Things are never what they used to be, and while some are resigning themselves to disaster, there are always others quite sure that much better times are on the way.

In the Age of Faith not everybody believed in God, and even during the closing years of the eighteenth century there were those who looked upon Progress with a jaundiced eye. In its own day the French Revolution was as variously interpreted as the Communist Revolution has been in ours—as enthusiastically hailed and almost, if not quite, as much hated and feared. Yet in the end, neither the good results nor the bad were so decisive as many expected them to be. The new world was less different from the old than was generally anticipated, and if any group has been justified by time, it is that which held only that human nature must continue to be much as it has always been.

All these are things which it would be well to bear in mind at the beginning of any attempt to assess a *modern temper*. Much that we think about ourselves is more closely paralleled by what other ages have thought about themselves than we usually realize. To say that to many the future looks dark because we have lost our faith or because forces beyond our control have been released into a world no longer manageable is only to say what has often been said.

✪ JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH, formerly Brander Matthews Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University, is now living in Tucson, Arizona, where he devotes himself entirely to writing. Author of *The Modern Temper,* which appeared in 1929, he is now at work on a new comparable study from which this essay is taken.

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Yet it is also true that the more excitable have sometimes been right. A really dark age did succeed the disintegration of the Roman Empire. A radically new world did begin when the Renaissance succeeded upon those High Middle Ages which, to a few historians, have seemed a peak of civilization. There is no a priori reason why the most dismal prophets of calamity may not possibly be right, why we may not be at the beginning of an age darker than that commonly called Dark. History is short, and there is no way we can know whether the calamities it records are the worst that are possible. Progress is not inevitable, disaster not impossible.

One thing, moreover, seems reasonably clear: our age has a heightened awareness of and an unusually deep preoccupation with those uneasy convictions which are to some extent characteristic of all times. Though it has been called, by those who anticipate history, "The Age of" many different things, none of the other labels is quite so inclusive or seems to fit quite so well as the familiar "Age of Anxiety."

Man is, to be sure, a worrying animal. To some extent he has always been "anxious." But it does appear that some sort of uneasiness is now more widely acknowledged and more variously explained than even the most skeptical observer would believe to be usual. Only the relatively few thoroughgoing Utopians seem to escape some sort of uneasiness, and it means something that what these Utopians rest their faith upon—revolutionary political change and vast extensions of technological prowess—are among the very things which the anxious view with most anxiety. Few ages have been less sure, rightly or wrongly, that they know what to expect.

Not since the Middle Ages has eschatology been so popular a subject of discussion. Though some seem convinced that civilization will emerge perfected after a world-wide calamity, at least as many predict that it will soon disappear altogether. On one thing only is there almost universal agreement: things can't go on this way much longer.

At the very least, the comfortable conviction, dominant over two centuries, that everything would grow slowly better has disappeared almost completely, and we are again believers in catas-

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trophe rather than evolution. Even the most extravagant of Communists insist that chaos must precede Utopia, and they join eagerly with the pessimists to discuss the question of how a world ends. Mr. Eliot, the most esteemed English-speaking poet of our generation, is a bit unorthodox in believing that it will be with a whimper rather than a bang; but he is sound on the essential point: in one way or another, it is ending.

Two world wars and more than one-third of a century lie between the last days of the Age of Confidence and the present moment. Many of us still living can, nevertheless, remember what a very different world was like; and we are aware, as younger men cannot be, how drastic and all-pervasive the change has been. Had you told us in 1914 what men would be thinking, believing and expecting in 1954, we should have found it harder to believe than are the fantastic predictions of George Orwell now.

It so happens that H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw died recently, and within a few years of each other. No two men writing in the English language—perhaps no two men writing in any language—had been so widely accepted by literate men as spokesmen for the last phase of the Age of Confidence. In curiously diverse but complementary ways, each had spent half a century telling the world that all was—or at least that all could be—well. Yet both died crying "Woe, woe" to the very people whom they had previously reassured. And the astonishing fact is that their complete reversal of opinion passed almost unnoticed. When each said, almost with his dying breath, "All is lost," the same public that had once accepted so trustingly their former assurances hardly noticed the about-face, because it had already been taken for granted that Shaw and Wells, like everybody else, had been compelled to make it.

In the case of Shaw it is easy to distinguish the successive phases of the transformation. Just after the turn of the century and at the time when he was still more orthodox Fabian than anything else, he wrote in *Major Barbara* a bouncing fable intended to demonstrate how inevitably and automatically an industrialized, capitalistic democracy would transform itself into a gentle, socialistic

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state, preserving all the virtues and abolishing all the defects of the England he knew. Scarcely more than a decade later, he admitted in *Heartbreak House* that the expected transformation was not taking place on schedule and urged upon his fellow countrymen his new conviction that, instead of waiting for the dialectic process to work out its benevolent inevitabilities, they must either "learn navigation" or go on the rocks. Approximately a generation after that, *Back to Methuselah* took another step away from any optimism which could possibly be called easy. The contemporary human being, it told us, is not capable of "learning navigation." It would take any individual at least three hundred years to do so.

Thus Mr. Shaw informed us, successively and after the intervention of barely decent intervals: first, that all *would be* well; second, that all *might be made* well; and, third, that *nothing could possibly be* well unless man managed somehow to transcend all those human limitations which are symbolized by his unfortunate tendency to die not long after the expiration of the Biblical three score and ten. After this succession of retreats, it is not surprising to find him arriving finally at a position summed up in his reply to a visitor who had mentioned that one of Shaw's fellow-playwrights in America was troubled about the state of the world. "Tell him not to worry. If, as I believe, man is about to destroy himself, he will be replaced by something better."

At every stage, the current conviction was represented as constituting some form of reasonable optimism. A good life for mankind will *begin* in perhaps a decade; it will be *achieved* in perhaps a generation; it cannot be *hoped for* until some age so distant that its place in time can only be described by the phrase "as far as thought can reach." This is "hope deferred" with a vengeance, hope deferred until hope itself becomes a grisly joke, offered in the inconceivably remote future and only to creatures who will not be men like ourselves, but "something better." In his early maturity Shaw ridiculed the Salvation Army and warned us to "Beware the man whose God is in the sky"; in his old age that is exactly where he placed the pie we were jokingly promised. For him, as for so many of his contemporaries, the vision of a "better world," which had once been so vivid, grew dimmer as the vision

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of the catastrophes which must precede it grew more and more clear.

The fact that the style and the mind of H. G. Wells were so much more prosaic and literal than Shaw's makes him, perhaps, an even better illustration of the typical course of the transformation by which early twentieth-century optimism was turned into mid-century despair. Both men began as more or less orthodox Fabian Socialists, but while Shaw always had mystical inclinations, Wells put his faith in technology, and the result was that their respective dreams of Utopia are comically unlike. Thus, while the Wellsian man of the future was happily engaged in pushing buttons and pulling levers, his Shavian counterpart in *Back to Methuselah* seemed to be inhabiting a country from which almost everything material had disappeared and which was thus returned to a sort of pastoral simplicity well suited to the tastes of the Ancients, who devoted themselves to contemplation rather than, like Wells's men, to the manipulation of super-gadgets. But even before Wells himself began to concern himself less and less with the mechanical wonders of the future as he imagined it, Aldous Huxley had transformed the Wellsian dream into that nightmare which, by the twenties, it was beginning to seem.

More significant is the fact that Wells and Shaw were more alike in their despairs than they had ever been in their hopes. The last of Wells's many prophecies was published by a newspaper syndicate very shortly before his death. He also cried "Woe, woe," predicting utter catastrophe as almost certain for the whole world and choosing phrases astonishingly like Shaw's when he spoke not only of the probability that man would "destroy himself," but also of the different creature which would replace him. Thus before they died, both the great popular educators of the English-speaking world did more than tell their pupils that unspeakable catastrophe lay just ahead: they also formally renounced the human race as a failure.

Whatever one may think of Shaw and Wells, either as artists or thinkers, their validity *as evidence* can hardly be questioned. They were neither cult leaders on the one hand, nor mere mass entertainers on the other. Their audience included almost the

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whole middle section of intelligent men, who must have found them to some considerable degree convincing. No doubt both their optimism and their pessimism were more clear-cut and positive than those of their readers. What they stated positively, these readers, after the usual fashion of readers, often accepted with no more than a "There may be something in it." But the curve of their thought and expectation corresponds to the curve of the general enlightened opinion. No two men could more truly represent the temper of their age. The collapse of their hopes summarizes the collapse of those world hopes which they represented.

What misapprehension, error, blindness or folly misled them? What is it that now seems clear, but which we and they failed to perceive only a generation ago?

Shall we say only that the mood of an age, like the mood of an individual, is merely the superficial by-product of its recent experience; that the early nineteenth century was confident because it had lived for several decades in peace and growing comfort, while the mid-twentieth century is anxious because it has gone through two wars, a depression and various revolutions? Or shall we assume that what we *thought* had some sort of direct relation to what happened—that we, with the best intentions in the world, *guided* ourselves toward a conviction of coming disaster?

To some degree this is what we must assume, unless we embrace in its simplest and most absolute form the conviction that either the dialectic of matter or some other form of Fate determines what will happen to us, while ideas, convictions and intentions are no more than phosphorescent epiphenomena which accompany the unfolding of Destiny. And if we do assume that what the world believed had some influence upon what happened to it, then we ought to examine its most significant beliefs, asking ourselves as we go along what was wrong with them.

Very orthodox Communists and very orthodox Christians think they know already. The latter can sum it up very briefly by saying simply that we "forgot God." The Communists need a few more words, but not really very many. They tell us that though Wells, Shaw and most of their declared disciples called themselves Socialist

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in a sense which implies an acceptance of Marxian teachings, they did not really "understand Marxism." In the first place, they often forgot to take literally enough and absolutely enough the Marxian doctrine which asserts the decisive role played by the dialectic of matter. In the second place, they clung sentimentally to all sorts of bourgeois ideals and weakly supposed that history could fulfill herself without requiring that those who wished to cooperate should sacrifice anachronistic scruples concerning individual rights, the sense of fair play, and the essential evil of violence. Therefore, even as an attempt to understand what was happening, much less as an attempt to control it, their ideology was confused and timid. They pretended to announce the future, but they were not wholeheartedly with it. Thus, those who have implicitly and completely accepted either Rome or Moscow see clearly what is happening and know what to think. Nothing which occurs surprises them, and they know that in the long run everything will turn out as it should. Theoretically at least, they have escaped from the Age of Anxiety and live again in an Age of Confidence.

But those who have not undergone either of these two conversions are puzzled and apprehensive. Either something *was* wrong in the thinking, or something *went* wrong in the plans, and they are sure neither what it was nor even which it was. Still less are they sure to what extent the errors are corrigible, the operational mistakes susceptible of rectification. And since they are not, as Wells and Shaw were, on the point of death, they are less ready merely to exclaim "All is lost" as they prepare to make their exits.

Man has, after all, survived up to now. He was "good enough," and he could learn quickly enough to achieve at least the minimal degree of success necessary for continued existence. Though he was neither good enough nor educable enough to create Utopia, many of us never supposed that he was. But if it has at last become evident that he is not even good enough to survive, that is quite another matter. He was good enough to do so for many thousands of years. He survived his first struggles with animate and inanimate nature; he survived his diseases, his wars, his social systems, his religions, and a series of misconceptions which now seem to have

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been sometimes almost suicidal. What has made him in 1952 less fitted to survive than he was in 5000 B.C.?

There is, to be sure, one answer to that question currently familiar in one form or another. Reduced to its simplest terms, that answer is this: man's ingenuity has outrun his intelligence. He was good enough to survive in a simple, sparsely populated world, where he was neither powerful enough nor in sufficiently close contact with his neighbors to do them or himself fatal harm. He is not good enough to manage the more complicated and closely integrated world which he is, for the first time, powerful enough to destroy. He is, perhaps, no more prone to war than he used to be and no more inclined to commit other evil deeds. But a given amount of ill will or folly will go further than it used to. And what is so obviously true in connection with war is equally true in less spectacular affairs. The complexities of an industrial society make men more dependent upon one another than they used to be, and the whole machinery of government is harder to handle. Wisdom and good will have either not increased at all or, in any event, not have kept pace with the necessity for them.

If we grant this familiar interpretation, then there are obviously at least a pair of alternatives to extinction. On the one hand we can say with Wells, "Let us get wise as soon as possible." On the other hand we could, of course, say with Thoreau, "Simplify."

If civilization is too complicated and there is no immediate prospect of our learning enough to manage it, we might suggest a reduction of that complexity. Instead of constantly seeking new sources of power, either in the oil of Arabia or in the interior of the atom, we might dispense with some of the sources we now have, and we might deliberately attempt to return to a political and social order that we would be capable of managing.

Our neighbors in different parts of the world were less a threat to us when we could not reach them and they could not reach us as readily as now—when, as a matter of fact, we could not even communicate with them, except after an interval of months. We would not need to be afraid of the Russians and they would not

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need to be afraid of us if we were as far away from each other as we used to be. In the thirteenth century, man was good enough at least to survive, and he would be good enough to survive now if things were as simple as they were then. We may think that we would hate to give up our "higher standard of living," but is that what we have really got—or is it only a higher standard of dying? What we ride toward at high speed may not be a more abundant life, but only a more spectacular death.

If you object that it would be as difficult to persuade mankind to simplify as it would be to make it wise, you may get from the enemies of complexity a grim answer. Events will not make man wise, but they may simplify him, willy-nilly. As a witticism current during the Second World War had it: "I don't know what will be the most important weapon in the next war, but I know what will be the most important weapon in the war after that—the bow and arrow." No one fought our most recent war for the purpose of "reducing the standard of living," but in all the countries involved, except the United States, it was reduced. After the next world war, or at latest by the time the next two or three are over, the reduction in complexity may be evident enough to the survivors. These wars might not, as Wells suggested, reduce man to the status of an extinct species, but they would very likely put him back into a new Dark Age, and he would probably be good enough to survive again in that environment, just as he was good enough to survive in it once before. A thousand years later, he might get another chance to try an industrial as opposed to an agricultural society. And if there is anything in the belief that he is getting better, no matter how slowly, then he might, by that time, be capable of making a go of it. If not, time is long. Back he would go again into something simple enough for him to be able to manage.

Neither of these prospects—compulsory simplification or the long wait while Creative Evolution produces something better than man—seems very cheerful to us poor creatures of an hour. We may be pardoned if we cast about for some *tertium quid* and if we accept it when found, even though it should raise doubts con-

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cerning the correctness of some of the fundamental assumptions of recent enlightened thought. If such representatives of that thought as Shaw and Wells were compelled to admit the complete wrongness of their predictions, why should we not wonder whether their premises may not have been equally erroneous?

Even in the depths of their disillusion, neither seems to have considered that possibility. Relatively early in their respective careers, one began to talk about "the race between education and catastrophe"; the other, to impart his suspicion that man was "not good enough." At the end, one said, "The race has been lost"; the other, "He turned out not to be." But Wells continued to assume that the whole trouble arose from the fact that man did not learn quickly enough; Shaw, that it was only because he did not change himself as rapidly as he should. But if man was becoming less and less capable of managing his affairs, coming to seem less and less likely to survive, the fault may possibly have been not with man as he is and ought to be, but with the Wellsian and Shavian man into which he was trying to turn himself.

In other words, perhaps modern ideas about man and the universe in which he lives failed of their purpose in exactly the same way that modern technology has failed—partially, at least—to produce that nearly universal peace, prosperity and plenty that were expected from it. We have engineered ourselves into a position where, for the first time in history, it has become possible for man to destroy his whole species. May we not at the same time have philosophized ourselves into a position where we are no longer able to manage successfully our mental and spiritual lives?

Few men would maintain that the failure of technology to achieve everything expected of it is due exclusively to a failure to develop fast enough, and not at all to the fact that it has often developed in the wrong direction—producing, for example, instruments of destruction more efficient than any of the instruments which foster and provide for a more abundant life. May it not be that in some fashion roughly analogous, we have educated ourselves out of certain ideas necessary to our survival, and that modern thought, like modern technology, has been busy chiefly with the

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preparation of instruments for an efficient as well as spectacular spiritual suicide calculated to occur at about the same time that the physical world is destroyed?

Nothing would have more greatly surprised the earliest modernists—say, the men of the Renaissance, if one wants to go back that far—than to learn that man was losing confidence in himself. In its early beginning, this modernism was the product of an upward surge of confidence in the capacities of the human being. It began by assuring him that he was capable of more than he had formerly believed possible; that he need no longer remain mentally limited by the horizon fixed in divine revelation, or physically limited by those forces of nature to which he was compelled to submit. He could stand on his own feet, determine his own destiny, and become like a god. Wells was still thinking in those terms when he used *Men Like Gods* as the title of a book. But his last apocalyptic eschatological vision was of this "God self slain on his own strange altar"—the altar of technological achievement.

That paradox has been generally recognized and most assiduously examined, but it has not been resolved. Behind it is another, less often discussed; and it may be that in this other lies the key to the first. What has been lost step by step is not only the conviction that we will manage to our own advantage the new world we have learned to create, but also the confidence in our ability to govern even ourselves. The fact that the same premises that attributed new potentialities to man soon began to deprive him of other supposed attributes and powers passed almost unnoticed, until at last we began to perceive how much less, as well as how much more than he had formerly been, the human being was now beginning to seem.

At least in many philosophies, as well as many theologies, he had been endowed with both Free Will and the ability to recognize certain absolutes called Good and Evil. It made comparatively little difference whether it was God or Nature, in the eighteenth-century use of the term, upon whose permanent, accessible criteria he could rely. In either case he could know what he ought to choose or do, and it rested with himself to decide whether or not he would

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do it. He was not, as the modern man has come to believe, merely the product of the forces that have operated upon him. He could make value judgments in the validity of which he truly believed, instead of telling himself that if one thing seems preferable to another, it can only be because the interests or the traditions of our nation, our society or our class make it seem so. And we can hardly be expected to manage the machines that we have created when we no longer believe that we have the power either of making ultimate decisions or of knowing what ultimate decisions ought to be made.

Though many have tried, no one has ever yet explained away the decisive fact that Science, which can do so much, cannot decide what it ought to do, and that the power which it confers must be guided by something outside it, if power is not to become—as it is already becoming—an end as well as a means. Yet it is just at this moment, when choices have become unprecedentedly fateful (because intentions can now be implemented as never before in the history of mankind), that scientific theories have persuaded us to abandon the very premises which might have made us feel capable of directing the power that science has put into our hands. If in one sense man is now more like a god than he ever was before, he has in another sense become less godlike than he ever previously imagined himself to be. The attributes of a god must include not merely power itself, but also the knowledge of how power should be used. What we have fallen victim to is thus not so much technology itself as the philosophy that has grown with its growing.

It is true that neither Shaw nor Wells was a fanatical exponent of this view which makes man not the captain of his soul, but the product of the forces that operate upon him. Shaw, especially, was prone to indulge an odd inconsistency when he alternately defended economic determinism and the theory that the will and imagination of the individual are all-important. Undoubtedly he was aware of the dangers inherent in too absolute an affirmation of what his Marxism seemed to imply. But the man whom he and Wells, each in his own way, were trying to educate was a man already prone to accept that very restricted estimate of his powers of self-direction that materialistic rationalism had encouraged. Hence

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the man whom both finally pronounced a failure was the man who had himself come to believe what that rationalism described.

To entertain the possibility that the creature who has become "not good enough to survive" is not man himself but only that version of man that he has recently accepted is not, necessarily, to assume that his thinking is either demonstrably or even actually false. Possibly, at least, his theories about his own nature are both correct and fatal. The atom bomb is no less a threat to the very people who made it because the revolutionary theory of matter in accordance with which it was designed is presumably true. Conceivably, we may be on the point of achieving spiritual as well as physical suicide because we have learned more than is good for us about both physical and human nature.

There remains, nevertheless, the cheerful possibility that we actually know less about the science of man than we do of the less difficult sciences of matter and that we may, just in time, learn more. Perhaps Hamlet was nearer right than Pavlov. Perhaps the exclamation "How like a god!" is actually more appropriate than "How like a dog! How like a rat! How like a machine!" Perhaps we have been deluded by the fact that the methods employed for the study of man have been for the most part those originally devised for the study of machines or the study of rats, and are capable, therefore, of detecting and measuring only those characteristics which the three do have in common. But we have already gone a long way on the contrary assumption, and we take it more completely for granted than we sometimes realize. The road back is not an easy one.

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The Turn of the Tide

H. M. TOMLINSON

AT THE LOWEST OF THE EBB of a spring tide, just where the smooth sands of Burra are so saturated that their polish inverts the sky, and on a day when a flat sea makes no division between land and water, some dark hummocks appear. They are not uncovered except at low water of a spring tide, but then they are plain, though of no height; that dark area in the miles of shining and immaculate strand is then as notable as would be a ship ashore.

Visitors seldom trouble to go down to see what the nondescript markings are. It is too far. They keep to the ridge of blue-grey boulders which protects the land from the breakers of storms. From those boulders to the sea is a long descent into windy space, when the tide is out, even on a fair day of summer. It is too far down into an empty but brilliant world. The people who are making holiday keep to the ridge, which shelters the village; it is easier and more natural to stroll the other way, down the hither side of the boulders, and up the street, to the shops and houses and the assurance to be had from seeing other people about. There is nothing to windward, before the turn of the tide, but the glinting of the Atlantic.

When we were young it surprised us to see that distant blemish on the polish of the sands at low water. What was it? It was as though the sea had left one of its secrets ashore, in daylight, though whether it was in the water or really at the edge of the beach it was impossible to say. It was a flaw in a mirror. Yet nobody appeared to notice it. Nobody was curious. Nobody suggested an exploration. And certainly it was strange and a little fearful, all that air and

✪ H. M. TOMLINSON, well-known English writer, is the author of numerous books published since 1912. "The Turn of the Tide" is an excerpt from *A Mingled Yarn*, a volume to be published in April of this year on the occasion of Mr. Tomlinson's eightieth birthday. He is now at work on a new novel, his first in many years.

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light to seaward. It was vast and bright and without sound, and perhaps we were better off where we were, on the boulders, which were solid and heavy, with much that was curious secreted in their damp crevices. Out beyond our foothold the world did not seem real or safe—so much space and so shimmering a brightness. Even the sands were shining, and shivered in a breeze like the skin of a bubble. If we trod on it, that bubble might burst, and down we should go to the clouds, which we could see floated below the beach as well as above it. Out there the air quivered. That world was too far and radiant to be safe. It did not look like the earth at all, but only the wide silence beyond the earth. If a wave moved in, it was only a brief shadow; it broke, and you could not hear it. It only glittered for a second. If we went down into that light, we might be like that white gull, which was soaring there for a moment, then turned with a flash and was not there.

Next morning we saw that more of the dark area was uncovered by the edge of the sea. Without saying where we were going, and without even telling each other what we wanted to know, two of us idled away and somehow found ourselves looking for shells nearer and nearer to the great light. Presently, when we glanced back, we saw we were sundered. If anyone had signaled to us from the boulders, we should not have known who it was. It might not have been for us. The ridge of rocks appeared to be of no account now. There did not seem enough of it to keep the sea from the land. If our friends were still resting upon it, they were only markings we could not make out. We were alone. But the bubble on which we walked did not burst. It only darkened around our feet at every step we took, as though we were not heavy enough to break the film. We had left the solid ground, and must go on. The sea was nearer and plainer. The horizon stood above us. In a little while these sands, which were the sea-floor, would be claimed again.

The black markings, when we reached them, appeared to be of no importance at all. We had come to a patch of tough and darkened clay. The sea had smoothed it, rounded its corners, varnished it here and there with a green glaze. It was pitted with the holes of a boring shellfish. We saw the white shells in places, sticking out from holes like double razors. Rills and gushes of the tide made

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islands of these hummocks, and between them were deep pools. It was a curious place, exposed and lonely, and the pools were alive with shrimps. In one tank of glass a cuttlefish, just as we arrived, shot through like a gleam of blue light. He vanished somehow, though we could not see where he had gone; he had spread among the vague colors at the deep bottom of the pool. But while we were still trying to find him, we noticed what we thought was a black leg-bone sticking from the clay by the edge of the water. We tried to get it out, but it was brittle, and snapped. It was not a bone, but a root of a tree.

What was a root doing there? Then we saw the clay was full of black bones. On its wet surface the roots coiled about as they do in life, which was very puzzling, for how could they have grown there? The clay was full of roots.

So our first guess, that a tree afloat had foundered there years ago, would not account for it. We took our spades and dug into it, and then found we could part the stiff black paste into layers as thin as paper, for it was like a mass of pressed leaves. It *was* of leaves. We found the familiar outline of an oak leaf, just as one does in the old soil in the shadow of a wood. While wondering over that, pulling a lump of the rubbish to pieces to see what was inside it, we found a hard, round object—why, of course, though it might have been a carving in ebony, it was a hazelnut! Had all this stuff grown where we saw it?

We looked back to the ridge of boulders. It was a mile away. It was too distant to make out anyone on it, or even what it was. Only the old church tower on the hill behind it was recognizable, and the houses. There was no forest, we knew, for many miles inland. Then the first impulse of the returning tide began to send thin layers of water in arcs up to our feet. The pool with the cuttlefish became agitated and thick with sand. Nothing like a forest was near us. The water was becoming noisy. It was time to go.

What did this discovery mean? Leaves and nuts and shellfish, yet the sea, too, which drove us away! How could such things be together? Oak roots and a cuttlefish! Things had got mixed. The sea was where the land used to be.

We did not talk about it on our return journey to the rocks and

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our friends. It is not easy to understand, when you begin to see that the sea and the land can change places. How long does it take? Does it take more than a lifetime? The queer shimmering of the wet sands before us in wind and light helped the suggestion that the earth was not so solid as we had thought it, and that strange things could happen and nobody know it. I remember that our elders were not very interested in our discovery. They were talking of other things. What was this old forest? There were no hummocks to be seen then. The tide was rolling over them, in so short a while. We might have been mistaken; but I had the hazelnut in my pocket, though that was not much to show for so great a change. Our elders, in fact, were talking of a piece of good fortune which had come to somebody. It concerned that field behind the rocks on which we were sitting. It had been bought, that field, for next to nothing. Somebody had got it, and was going to build a house there. Could there be a better place? An excellent site, somebody remarked. So near to the beach, and sheltered from the wind. Its value would increase as this secluded little hamlet became better known, as it deserved to be.

How long ago was that morning? It does not seem long ago. That hazelnut still survives, and as I look at it on my desk, I can see the wet sand darkening round our feet as we walk in the sun. As who walks? Where are the people who sunned themselves that day on the rocks? They all cannot meet again. When last year I was on those rocks, in a glance the world appeared as it did yesterday, or years ago. There were the hummocks. The boulders were in place. That light out beyond might have been the eternal light; it had not ceased to quiver, as though alive and immortal, and even the gull reappeared in a flash as I watched. Perhaps the ridge of boulders did not seem to be as high as when we first knew it, but there could be more than one reason for that.

Yes, our memory was at fault. When I looked round, there was the scene which had given us, long ago, the happiness of abiding tranquillity. That immense gulf of brightness assured us still of a changeless and radiant peace. The clouds were the same clouds. Those waves, advancing in leisurely ranks, falling along the strand in deliberation, were the same waves. The transient arcs of thin

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glass, rimmed with foam which the tide impelled over the sands, were so familiar that they could have been there all the time, more lasting than the works of men.

"Well," said my companion, "then this will be the field which someone was lucky enough to buy. Must be, I think. There was no other."

Yes, it was the field, what was left of it. Whoever the man was, he had built his house, but it was the worse for the weather. He had ceased to live in it. When? He had made a garden, but the ridge of boulders had invaded it. Rocks were scattered before his dilapidated porch. The tops of the garden pales projected, in places, only just above the stones. The invasion was real and deep; part of the roof of the house was blown awry.

There could be no doubt about it. This was the place. There used to be a row of cottages opposite that field, with a path between; and there they were still, though changed. The path was not to be seen. Boulders filled the end of the little street which had been kept so neat. The row of cottages had shrunk, but I could not guess by how much. At the seaward end of the row, the dead turf of old gardens was hanging from a little cliff of crumbling sand. One cottage, at least, had gone. On the wall above us a rag of faded wallpaper fluttered, and a firegrate beside it was high out of reach, with all the Atlantic before it, but no floor.

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In Pursuit of Innocence

PAUL B. SEARS

EXCAVATION AT TEOTIHUACÁN, the great religious center of the pyramids in the upper Basin of Mexico, has exposed a charming mural known as "El Paraíso Terrenal de Teotihuacán." This glimpse of paradise shows the blessed disporting themselves in a great pool of clear water, fed by a stream flowing from the mouth of Tlaloc, the Rain-God.

Archeologists had long wondered whether climatic changes had anything to do with certain curious shifts of culture in the Basin of Mexico. Eventually laborious sampling, countings and measurements were made of lake sediments, which preserve the record of past climates. These gave good evidence that Teotihuacán existed during a dry period. The mural seems to bear this out, for men furnish their paradises in terms of what some pedagogues call "felt needs"—in this instance, the need of more abundant water.

Since humanity is forever either coming out of or heading for heaven—but never there—its ideas of paradise can at least give us a locus of direction and a measure of desire. For the Western World, the Golden Age of the past and the City of Golden Streets seem to have one quality in common. That quality is innocence. The lion and the lamb lie side by side in a vision that pervades the dreams of men.

Mankind is in eternal pursuit of innocence: good men trying to attain it, evil men to destroy it. To saint and sinner alike, its value is known, to Christian on his way to the Delectable Mountains, to Herod in his slaughter of the Innocents, perhaps even to Apollo in pursuit of Daphne.

Innocence is far from being an innocuous, anemic thing. I once knew a most competent young magician whose art derived from

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the great Houdini by way of the young man's father, who had been locksmith to the master. By endless practice my friend had disciplined his muscles and nerves into beautiful co-ordination and control so that he performed with the utmost assurance. One situation, however, always threatened his composure. That was when he had to perform before an audience in which the front row was occupied by children. To him this was a perpetual hazard. It was no trick to deceive the sophisticated eye of the adult. But the clear, unspoiled gaze of childhood was quite a different matter, ever threatening to penetrate his deceptions.

The pains of learning are trivial as compared with those of unlearning. Ask any musician what it costs to achieve simplicity. Those who practice the graphic arts often speak literally of "innocence of eye"—that priceless quality which enables them to look and see as the newborn do, free from the implications and associations built up by long experience and sophistication. It is not easy to reacquire this lost freshness of vision.

Something very like it infuses the disarming wisdom of those who have the gift of spiritual insight. Things that are concealed from the prudent are revealed to children. Those who are to be saved must be born again. The worldly Europe of the seventeenth century was enchanted by its concept of the noble savage. Even a modern scholar and scientist, the late George Vaillant, in his profound study of the Aztecs, saw behind the confusion of fierce gods and bloody human sacrifice a singleness of devotion which compelled his admiration.

In short, whether men dream of a Golden Age in the past or future, they cherish, in the moments they can spare from the grim business of getting their daily bread, the measure of a world that is better than the world in which they are living.

The slumbering Orient, whose dream has so long been of the ultimate peace of Nirvana, is now, as General MacArthur reminded the Congress, astir with new hopes and new aspirations. And so, indeed, are men everywhere. But what leader has ever taken sufficient pains to search for the common element in these aspirations, behind all the diversities of cultures and the conflicts

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of material interests? What leader has ever in his mind carried to its logical conclusion the fact that the peoples of the world are slowly becoming literate?

One may talk of the overriding power of self-interest and the supremacy of economic controls over human motives and behavior. Certainly the empty belly cries for food and the naked body for protection. But these are only the beginning. Satisfied, they give strength and opportunity to express deeper wants. Watch the baby through childhood as he begins to listen and make sounds, and you become aware of his intense desire to understand and be understood. Observe the behavior of that other traditional member of the household, the dog—his unflagging attention, his touching appeals, his warnings. He, too, wishes to understand and be understood, to communicate. How easily this desire is thwarted and the relationship corrupted, for child and dog alike!

In them, I should suppose, we have innocence if we are to find it anywhere. Yet there is nothing negative about it. It reveals no element of separation, withdrawal or isolation. On the contrary, it is alive with the impulse to expand and participate, to comprehend to the fullest. To say that it is bent on its own destruction makes no biological sense, nor does it make ethical and aesthetic sense either.

To some extent, however pitifully distorted and perverted, this impulse persists through life in the generality of mankind. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "Now we see . . . darkly, but then face to face." Religious intuition cannot separate the omnipotence and infinite goodness of God from His omniscience.

Making whatever allowance we must for the mixed character of human motives, the impulse we have been talking about finds its fullest expression in the scholar, certainly in the scientist. He is a deceptive fellow, this scientist, deceiving himself as often, and as innocently, as he deceives others. Most misleading is the technical device of impersonality and disinterest, without which he cannot do honest and effective work. At the moment his feelings enter into his observations or his calculations, the truth he is after is imperiled. Actually this represents nothing more than the kind of

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necessary precaution which obliges the bacteriologist to be sure his glassware is sterile, the mathematician to check his calculations, or the chemist to run a blank along with his test.

Inevitably the habits of the workshop carry over into life outside it. Pasteur surreptitiously polishes the immaculate silver of his hostess with his napkin. The biologist, disciplined to believe only what he sees, is impatient with those who sense the ineffable. The physicist, accustomed to rigid controls and to advancing from certainty, becomes contemptuous of the improvisations of political life and suspicious of the good faith of those who practice that essential art. It is not wholly surprising that Germany, a leading nation in science, twice fell into line behind leadership which seemed to offer a pattern that, although circumscribed, was explicit and definite.

Another grave source of misunderstanding is the confusion of science with technology. Widespread among non-scientists, this confusion results in giving the discoverer of scientific truth the blame, or credit, for the way in which his discovery is used. Now that the sources of private support for independent research are drying up, and an increasing bulk of scientific energy is being devoted to projects which industry and government—civil and military—consider expedient, there is a lively danger that the scientists themselves may come to share the confusion of the laity. Already one detects signs of impatience in groups of scientific men when the distinction between "pure" and "applied" science is brought up. The issue, of course, is not purity, but freedom to pursue truth for its own sake. Beyond that point the scientist should have the same right, and obligation, as the rest of us to determine the ends to which knowledge is applied.

The scientist remains, for all his impersonality of method, very much a member of the human race. He is motivated, as is the artist, by an intuitive, creative impulse that lies beyond the realm of debate. He is sustained, as are the religious, by a profound and unshakable faith. Without faith in a consistent universe whose laws can be made evident by inquiry, he would not get very far. Almost any prolonged research offers tempting chances for the unconfident to say, "This is the end of my road."

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In both the creative impulse and the confidence which make science possible, there is a strong element of hope—hope for a wholeness of vision and understanding that will be clear and without guile. This hope is not confined to the scientist. Every great religious faith, knowing that the values and actions of men are governed by their notions as to the kind of universe in which they live, has set up its special cosmogony—its explanation of how the universe came to be, and the laws under which it operates.

That this responsibility, so far as the physical universe is concerned, must pass from theology into the keeping of science was made clear by Tyndall in his address as president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1884. It was powerfully re-enforced by Lord Kelvin, who said, "Science is bound by the everlasting law of honor to face fearlessly every problem that can fairly be presented to it." These are not words of arrogance, but of dignity and humility in the acceptance of a trust. Professor A. V. Hill, speaking in 1952 as a successor to Tyndall, placed the whole problem in its perspective: "The improvement of man's estate by the application of human knowledge is one of the loftiest of adventures; but a belief that it can be achieved by scientific methods alone, without a moral basis to society, is a perilous illusion."

Yet that illusion prevails widely, chiefly, I think, because the applications of scientific knowledge have done so much to ease the physical and mental labors of great segments of humanity, to prolong life and add to its amenities. It has led us to look upon the scientist as a handy man, a servitor for the solving of material and practical problems, ignoring his more profound role as a source of perspective. Thus we accept the dicta of physics in such problems as machine design, while we largely ignore their application to the great landscape of which we are all components.

It is not uncommon today to hear talk of an expanding economy, when in fact we are confronted by an expanding population in a finite environment. If doubts are expressed, the usual rejoinder is, "We have not even begun to use the resources which science can bring to bear to increase production." Granting all the power and promise of those resources, the ultimate logic is that of an investor

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who chooses to underwrite a perpetual motion machine. Science does open up great vistas of the possible, but the shrewd investor has developed a healthy respect for the verdict of experiment and slide rule. He wastes no capital trying to derive 101 calories of energy from a measure of fuel containing 100, but instead focuses his attention upon the production of engines which might conserve some of the 70 to 80 per cent of fuel energy now being lost. Airplanes leave the ground against the pull of gravity not because the law of gravity has been canceled, but because it is a constant factor to be taken into account in the designing of planes.

How often one finds whole communities seeing through a glass darkly, caught up in natural processes of which they are utterly unaware! For an example, the people of one suburb had spread their homes in close array over ridges and valleys, replacing soil and vegetation with a virtually waterproof cover of buildings, walks and highways. And then citizens wondered why cellars in the lower streets were flooded after every rain! The members of this community, by the way, were mostly college graduates and presumably had met the conventional requirement in science.

Two important shipping centers (no doubt their number could be multiplied) have kept their harbors open by constant dredging, the cost of which, when analyzed, represents an expenditure of about five hundred dollars for the clearance of each vessel in an average year. Solely as a tax on commerce this is bad enough. But the problem comes into focus when we learn—as the citizens of the ports in question have finally come to realize—that the burden of silt, whose removal is so costly, represents the wastage and deterioration of upstream farms. The same deadly erosion, due to improper land-use, which is sapping the economy of a rural area is a plague to industry and to the taxpayer in general.

Why are not such situations immediately evident to the people who are affected by them? Clearly something is lacking in their preparation for responsible citizenship. They have gone through a mill of education which is one of the wonders of the modern world. They have been taught about the natural world in the grades, in secondary school and in college. Yet I suspect that all along the line much of this teaching has been out of context. I recall the

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surprise with which students discover that a reaction which they learned about in the chemistry building applies in the living plant as well as in the test tube.

Such defect of vision is not confined to the average, presumably educated citizen. It shows up, to the cost of society, among the specialists in science, too. An excellent book on the movement of water in and over the earth makes no mention of vegetation, so far as I can discover, although there is a mass of evidence as to the importance of plant life in regulating the behavior of water. Geologists have at times impeded the advance of better land-use practice by their insistence that erosion is an inevitable geological process. It is a standing complaint among biologists that their counsel is ignored by engineers in the planning of great public works in which biological factors constitute definite engineering hazards. Many biologists in turn seem to have an emotional block toward mathematics and fail to appreciate the problems of the engineer. During the recent war, Great Britain made effective use, in the antisubmarine campaign, of a group of scientists whose field was cold-shouldered by the leading scientific advisers of our own country, since it did not deal primarily with machines and chemicals.

Such difficulties are really failures of communication. We too often forget that to science communication is as vital as experiment and observation—and is to all scholarship. Much more than a mere unloading is involved. There must be a meeting of minds as well. Some years ago one of the federal courts wearied of the conflicting testimony of expert scientific witnesses retained by opposing sides. The issue happened to be whether smelter fumes were damaging truck crops in an irrigated valley. At length the court decided to employ its own panel of specialists. These men sat down together and in a few weeks determined the merits of a contest which had dragged on for years.

Society needs to apply, on a much wider scale, the priceless tradition of the Friends, with their "sense of the meeting." To bring this about is no easy matter, but I think a good place to begin is with the teaching of science at the college level. It is here that the average educated citizen should have an opportunity

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to get some convincing grasp of the framework of physical reality within which we live. It is here, too, that the future specialist in science should acquire the sense of social and scientific perspective which he now too often lacks.

Most colleges require that each student take some one course in laboratory science—the kind not specified. One stated object is to acquaint him with the method of science. Two very necessary ingredients of the scientific process are curiosity and lack of haste—ample leisure to make mistakes and reflect upon them, to get the feel of one's material, and to repeat procedures until some sense of confidence and mastery emerges. This, under our system of mass-produced education, is a large order, as James Thurber has shown in his reminiscences of the botany laboratory. To him the whole business was merely an intricate form of fraud.

Another stated object is to give the student an insight into the universe of natural phenomena of which he is a part. But the impression he receives is too often that of an involved and technical kind of chess whose rules have little connection with his daily life, largely, I suspect, because they are not taught in context with the rest of human knowledge. The teacher is too intensely aware only of his immediate subject. But teaching is an art, and the artist achieves design, balance—and fidelity—by always keeping a corner of his eye on the whole of the scene he is sketching, no matter what detail he may be working on at the moment. In this lies his "innocence of eye."

We speak of the secrets of nature. Human culture has arisen not from secrecy, but from effective communication, giving groups of men their common understanding and value. So formed, every human culture has developed its own internal logic and integrity, its sense of direction. To this end there must be, in an age of science, a continuing struggle to achieve clarity and grace of expression, not only between the specialist and the generality of men, but within the disciplines themselves.

The task of knowledge is not fulfilled with its gathering. Only when it has become the property of those who sing the songs, shape the manners, and write the laws of the commonwealth, is its charge completed.

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Do Economists Know Anything?

FRITZ MACHLUP

THE QUESTION "Do economists know anything?" must mean either that there is some doubt about it in the mind of him who raises it or that there may be such doubt in the minds of those for whom he wishes to answer it. That there is justification for doubt we shall presently see. Much depends, of course, on what is meant by "economists," by "know" and by "anything."

If one defines an economist as one who knows a certain minimum, our question becomes meaningless: for then those who do not know enough are simply not called economists. Such an attempt to reduce a statement of fact to a mere tautology we shall rule out. It would be like the sample proposition in the textbook of logic that all teachers are successful because, if a teacher is one who teaches, those who do not succeed in teaching cannot be called teachers. For our purposes we define an economist as one who has been exposed to a specified kind of certified training or whose literary output has been recognized by publication in professional journals. Economists by this definition may possibly not know what they ought to know.

The meaning of the second term in our question, the meaning of knowing, or knowledge, is a much more exciting subject of discussion, to which I shall return later.

The third term in our question—the term "anything"—is used in a colloquial sense. If one expresses a doubt as to whether economists *know* anything, one does not, of course, imply that they might not know *anything,* but merely that they do not know *enough*—that is, enough about economics. Frank Knight of Chicago, one of our greatest economic philosophers, declares that

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the trouble with economists, as well as thinkers in other fields, is not that they know too little, but that they know such "a lot that is not true." According to this interpretation, our question would refer to a doubt whether economists know the correct solutions to many important problems.

I

Now, why has the doubt arisen? I shall submit several reasons for it and shall illustrate each of them.

Conflicting Judgments about Policies

When governmental economic policies are debated, expert economic opinion is frequently invited. Instances in which there is a consensus usually go unnoticed, while conflicts of judgment receive wide publicity. Hundreds of examples could be cited from official documents.

A few months ago a committee of Congress published the replies it had received to certain questions on credit control and debt management. The committee had asked, among other things, whether it was desirable and possible to maintain low interest rates for all or part of the government debt while the interest rates for private debts were increased through a policy of credit restriction. Some of the experts answered that this was desirable and possible; others, that it was desirable but not possible; others, that it was possible but not desirable; and others, that it was not desirable and not possible.

The question of the policy of direct price controls offers another example of this disagreement. Some economists recommend this policy as an appropriate check on inflation in the present situation. Others regard it as inappropriate at present, but indicated under different circumstances. Others, again, find it inappropriate under any circumstances.

Similar differences of opinion exist everywhere in the world. In Italy economists are divided on the merits of a balanced budget, of more public works, of a less restrictive credit policy. In France economists quarrel about the same matters and also about taxes and about the free gold market. In England, to select just one of

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the many controversies, the question of the exchange rate between the pound sterling and the dollar finds economists on all possible sides: they recommend leaving the rate unchanged; making the pound sterling cheaper; making the pound sterling more expensive. Even in Russia conflicts of opinion may exist—although a procedure has apparently been established for their orderly liquidation.

Unfulfilled Promises of Effects of Policies

The second reason for doubting that economists know their business is the frequent discrepancy between promised and realized effects of policies actually adopted. However, if economists disagree in their recommendations, and particular policies are then adopted on the strength of the expert advice of some, the failure of the promised effects to materialize cannot be blamed on the others who advised against the policies. Whatever the outcome, if economists disagreed beforehand, some can say afterward, "I told you so." Yet this does not prevent disappointed people from railing against *all* economists.

The chronicles are full of disappointed hopes and unfulfilled expectations of this sort. Think of the economist who told President Roosevelt in 1933-34 that an increase in the purchase price of gold would bring forth a like increase in the general price level. The dollar was devalued, the price of gold boosted by almost 70 per cent, but the prices of commodities refused to follow the example. Think of the economists who promised in 1945 that the abolition of price controls would not result in a price increase. The controls were abolished and prices subsequently rose. Think of the promises made when the International Monetary Fund was established in 1944, that within a few years the world's major currencies would be freely convertible, freed from exchange restrictions. Eight years have passed, but all the restrictions are still there. Think of the agricultural economists who promised that restrictions in the acreage used for planting potatoes would reduce the output and aid the price supports. The acreage was restricted, but output per acre increased so much that total output was greater than before.

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Bungled Predictions

Perhaps I am a bit pedantic if I distinguish between bad conditional promises, bad prescriptions and bad predictions. In a real prediction the forecaster assumes the responsibility for the conditions on which his prediction depends; he says not merely what will happen *if*—but what will happen. Many economists have tried their luck as forecasters. It has not been particularly good.

The record of stock market forecasters is notoriously poor. I do not know whether many investment analysts are economists by my definition. Probably not. But since they are sometimes regarded as economists, we may take a quick look into their record. A comparison of the stock market forecasts by sixteen financial services over four and one-half years with the actual stock market movements showed that someone acting upon the forecasts would have done worse—by 1.43 per cent annually—than one investing in an average mixture of common stock. A comparison of the published forecasts by the best-known expert in the field over a period of twenty-six years showed that someone acting upon the forecasts would have earned less—by 3.5 per cent annually—than one investing outright, without any trading, in representative common stock for the period.

Economists may properly repudiate any connection with the stock market forecasts by pseudo-economists; but their own record contains an embarrassing number of howlers. There were the famous economist and his followers who predicted in the late twenties that a "new era" of continuing prosperity had started. Not long after those predictions came the crash of 1929, the beginning of the great depression. A few months after the crash, economists at the American Statistical Association meeting predicted that the "recession" was practically over; and then there were those who, from 1930 to 1932, predicted that recovery was "just around the corner." But, in fact, matters got worse from corner to corner and then took years to improve. There were also economists during the thirties who predicted that the American economy would collapse under the burden of the public debt. The debt increased further—it doubled, tripled and quadrupled—

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but no collapse of any sort followed. Near the end of the last war economists looked ahead into the postwar scene and saw a period of acute unemployment. The prediction was that there would be unemployment of from six to eight million workers, and of even twenty million or more, according to the worst Cassandras. No such unemployment was experienced, and the actual situation was more nearly one of scarcity of labor than of scarcity of jobs.

These are examples of gratuitous predictions, where economists stuck their necks out in the capacity of self-appointed forecasters. The score sheets of forecasters in governmental budgeting or planning offices, charged with the estimation of tax revenues, foreign trade proceeds, and so forth, show many instances in which the estimates proved to be uncomfortably far off. In the United States budget for 1949 the revenue from direct taxes on individuals was estimated at 23.3 billion dollars; the actual revenue was only 18.7 billion. There have been years for which a budget deficit had been estimated and an actual surplus emerged, and years for which a surplus had been estimated and a deficit emerged. In the 1949 economic plan of the United Kingdom, exports were put down at 160 million pound sterling for the first six months, but the actual figure was only 91 million.

Contradictory Explanations of Past Events

Economists disagree not only about the future, but also about the past. Many historical events are given different and contradictory explanations. It is in this respect that economists are even worse than physicians. Physicians, when they do not act in concert, may disagree on the therapy, the prognosis and the diagnosis, but as pathologists they usually agree on the post-mortem, though perhaps only because the dead cannot well go to another pathologist. Economists normally remain in disagreement on post-mortems.

The great depression which began with the crash of 1929 has been dissected over and over again, but expert opinion about its causes is as divided today as it was twenty years ago. There is no agreement on whether before the crash there was too much investment or too little, whether people consumed too much or not enough, whether credit was too easy or not easy enough, whether

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profits were too high or too low, whether wage rates were rising too fast or too slowly.

Similarly controversial is the explanation of the recession of 1937. Economists have attributed it alternatively to the sudden balancing of the federal cash budget in that year, to reactions to the soldiers' bonus of the preceding year, to restrictive credit policies of the Federal Reserve System, to the sharp rise of the wage level, to excessive saving by income recipients, and to various combinations of these and other things; and several of the explanations are inconsistent with one another.

Divergent Statements of Facts

If economists disagree on the explanations of certain events, one would suppose that they would at least agree that they have really taken place. But not even this is always the case. It happens that they disagree on whether production has increased or declined, whether prices on the average have gone up or down, whether the export or import surplus has grown or shrunk, and so forth. When it comes to measurement, the discrepancies in the figures produced by different statisticians are very embarrassing.

Discrepancies in statistical data may be due to differences in basic definitions, in classifications, reporting systems and timing—entirely apart from errors and deliberate misrepresentation. Frequently we can explain the discrepancies by pointing, for example, to obvious differences in classification or definition. Sometimes, however, we are unable to reconcile the different results of statistical observation.

Well-known examples can be found in foreign trade statistics, where the exports from one country to another are rarely reported at the same figures by the two governments concerned, either in terms of value or of physical quantities. The United States would report the import of gold from the United Kingdom, and the latter would report the export of gold to the United States, but the figures would not be equal. In the statistics of merchandise trade the discrepancies were often over 100 per cent, and up to 166 per cent for the earlier decades of this century, and still have been notable during recent years. For example, the United States re-

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ported the 1935 imports from Britain 26.5 per cent higher than Great Britain reported her exports to the United States. Trade balance figures usually differ still more. For example, there was a 43.4 per cent difference between the official figures reported as the 1938 trade balance between Canada and the United States. In a comparison made for three selected years, 1928, 1935 and 1938, the official reports made by Canada and France on the trade balance between the two countries were found to differ by 585.3 per cent.

It has been demanded that all statistical work of the government be centralized. If that were done, people might begin to trust all statistical data published and this would be too bad. As it is, we can maintain a healthy skepticism when we read, for example, that the 1939 production of manganese ore in the United States was higher according to the Bureau of Census than according to the Bureau of Mines, the difference being 43 per cent—or when we read that the 1944 crop of sweet potatoes was lower according to the Census than according to the Department of Agriculture, the difference being 13.2 per cent at first and later revised down to 7.8 per cent.

In measures of economic aggregates, such as the national income, the results depend not only on courageous estimates and brave guesses, but also very largely on the underlying concepts and theories. A few years ago the Department of Commerce revised several basic concepts and methods of estimation. As a result, the national income of 1945, which had been reported at 161 billion dollars, was raised to 182.8 billion—that is, by 21.8 per cent. And while the 1946 income had been above that of 1945 on the basis of the old method, it was below the 1945 income on the basis of the new method.

Labor force and unemployment statistics suffer severely from difficulties of estimation as well as of definition. There were years when the unemployment figures published by different organizations in the United States showed discrepancies of several million people. And two different methods of measuring the size of the labor force—both methods used by the Bureau of Census for April, 1950—resulted in a discrepancy of 3.5 million people.

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II

The picture that I have painted of the performance of economists looks rather grim. I must now confess that it is not a fair picture, but almost a caricature, overemphasizing the worst features. There is much to be said in defense of economists.

Conflicting Judgments

Economists who disagree on policy do not necessarily hold different theories. Indeed, it could be shown that it was on the basis of the same theories that some have recommended and others rejected a particular economic policy. The disagreement was partly on certain assumptions concerning psychological, sociological and political probabilities, and partly on certain objectives conforming to different political, social and moral philosophies. Where the goals are different, it is not surprising that judgments about policy are different. And if the views, for example, about the most probable adjustments of related government policies are different, it is obvious that recommendations about a particular policy cannot be unanimous.

Consider the example of the conflicting judgments about the interest rate on the public debt. Why should some economists regard it as desirable and others as undesirable that the government should be protected from increased interest rates? Increases in interest rates have, among other things, the function of discouraging would-be borrowers from borrowing and spending as much as they otherwise would. Those who assume that the government also would borrow less if it had to pay more interest on its debts do not like to protect the government from rising interest rates. On the other hand, those who assume that the government would not be induced to spend less when the cost of debt increases find such a cost increase a wholly gratuitous "discipline."

Let us consider the example of direct price controls. A part of the conflict of judgment on the appropriateness of controls stems from political theory and political philosophy: how much do we value freedom of enterprise, either as a goal in itself or as a possible precondition of other kinds of freedom? In other words, economic policy is not derived solely from economics, but from

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a complex of considerations involving several fields of knowledge and also numerous value judgments. You can no more expect economists to agree on the appropriateness of using price controls in fighting inflation than you can expect nuclear physicists to agree on the appropriateness of using atomic bombs in fighting the North Koreans.

Unfulfilled Promises

That the promised effects of adopted policies frequently do not materialize may merely confirm the warnings of those economists who had opposed the policies when they were still under consideration. And it is a fact that many economic policies are adopted by the government in the face of the opposition of a majority of economists. In these cases the unsatisfactory outcome can surely not be blamed on the profession at large. For example, increases of tariffs in this country were usually made against the almost unanimous opposition of economists. The devaluation of the dollar in 1934 was recommended by only a handful of economists, whose economic reasoning was rejected by almost all the others.

Moreover, unfulfilled promises of effects of policies are not always the result of bad judgment and, still less, of bad economics. Sometimes they are the expected outcome of "tongue-in-cheek" promises. I have a strong suspicion that most of the economists who in 1945 said that prices would not rise, or would rise only temporarily, after the abolition of price controls were not themselves convinced of this. They were so anxious to get rid of the controls—and for good reasons—that they found it permissible to seek support for the repeal of the control law by declaring that the stability of the price index was not endangered. Economists occasionally assume the role of politicians and, plugging for their favored policies, promise effects which they do not really expect to be realized. I am sorry that in defending the intelligence of economists I seem to cast aspersions on their morals.

Bungled Predictions

Unconditional predictions are always risky ventures. However, to predict a chemical reaction in an experiment in which all relevant factors are under control, or to predict the working of a

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machine in which most of the relevant factors are under control, is one thing; it is another thing to make predictions where no effective controls are possible. All of us often laugh about the bad luck of the weather forecaster when the air pressures, winds and cloud formations play tricks on him and give us a warm, sunny day after he has told us of an imminent snow storm. But the economic forecaster is even worse off. For he can control neither the actions of government or other sources of power in the economy nor the reactions of the people; and, to make things almost hopeless, he cannot know to what extent his forecasts will influence the actions and reactions of governments, unions, corporations, consumers. The weatherman may announce his forecasts in all the newspapers and over the radio, but, as far as I know, the clouds and air fronts will not care what he says. Economists who announce their forecasts of a slump or a boom may easily make people jump and do different things from what they would have done without the forecasts.

In view of the difficulties involved, it is surprising that most economic predictions are not much worse than they are.

Contradictory Explanations

In predictions of future events we believe that we know the conditions and factors at work and can tell what the outcome will be; in explanations of past events, what we know is the outcome, and we are called upon to tell what were the responsible conditions and the significant factors at work. If in the natural sciences more stress is laid upon prediction than upon explanation, the reason is that they are so much concerned with controlled experiments. Explanations of past events where no checks are possible as to the actual circumstances and operative factors are equally difficult and controversial in the natural and social sciences. To establish beyond doubt or controversy the causes responsible for the explosion of a boiler or a tank or for the collapse of a structure is sometimes as impossible as it is to establish the causes responsible for explosion or collapse in the economy. Several different explanations may fit the data, and there is no way of knowing for sure what may have caused things to come out as they did.

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Divergent Statements of Facts

The many examples of bad and irreconcilable statistical information should not blind us to the fact that great progress has been made in the collection and presentation of numerical data on the economic process. We have many more data than we used to have, and many large margins of error have been reduced to reasonable size. We may, of course, note the unreliability of national income measurements but should realize that a generation ago there existed no such measurements at all. Foreign trade is one of the few areas of economic activity in which statistical information was collected in early times. These data are now becoming much more reliable, and price and production statistics are getting better from year to year.

But this progress has its dark side, for it is a function of the decline of individual freedom. A large part of our statistical information is a by-product of governmental "interferences," such as restrictions of imports and exports, regulation of building and construction, controls of prices and production, taxation and all the rest. Compulsory reporting of all sorts of things—filling out forms, filing applications and returns, registering at this office and that—are requisites of comprehensive statistical information; and old-fashioned individualists resent such encroachments on their economic freedom and on their right to privacy. If we are sympathetic with this point of view, we should not complain that our knowledge of economic data is deficient, but should rather deplore its improvement.

III

To my defense of the economists' performance I should like to add a brief on the complexity of the economists' work. I can do this best by quoting two passages from an essay by John Maynard Keynes. Keynes had met Max Planck of Berlin, the famous originator of the quantum theory in physics and winner of the Nobel prize, and reported that Planck

> remarked to me that in early life he had thought of studying economics, but had found it too difficult. Professor Planck could easily master the

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whole corpus of mathematical economics in a few days. He did not mean that! But the amalgam of logic and intuition and the wide knowledge of facts, most of which are not precise, which is required for economic interpretation in its highest form, is, quite truly, overwhelmingly difficult for those whose gift mainly consists in the power to imagine and pursue to their furthest points the implications and prior conditions of comparatively simple facts which are known with a high degree of precision.

Keynes might have added another point concerning the comparative difficulty of physics and economics, namely, that physicists may without misgivings assume physical nature to be unchanging, whereas economists can never be certain that all important factors in the relevant social relations remain unchanged. Indeed, economists know that many rather basic conditions have changed in the course of centuries or decades, and that changing legal and other social institutions not only present researchers, theorists and practitioners with ever-new problems, but also require significant alterations in the solutions of old ones.

Under these circumstances many qualifications are needed to make a "master-economist"; they are described by Keynes as follows:

> . . . the master-economist must possess a rare *combination* of gifts. He must reach a high standard in several different directions and must combine talents not often found together. He must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher—in some degree. He must understand symbols and speak in words. He must contemplate the particular in terms of the general, and touch abstract and concrete in the same flight of thought. He must study the present in the light of the past for the purposes of the future. No part of man's nature or his institutions must lie entirely outside his regard. He must be purposeful and disinterested in a simultaneous mood; as aloof and incorruptible as an artist, yet sometimes as near the earth as a politician.

Such a "master-economist" probably has never existed. Keynes himself was, in my opinion, merely an approximation to the ideal which he himself so vividly described. Even the greatest economists lacked several of the qualifications of the "master-economist." But that does not mean that they did not know anything, or that

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even the minor lights in the profession have to be ashamed of lack of knowledge.

IV

We are now ready to return to the meaning of "knowledge."

Practical-minded Americans, I am afraid, have embraced the notion that all knowledge must serve action. This view was expressed by Francis Bacon in the slogan *scientia est potestas* (science is power) and by Auguste Comte in the phrase *savoir pour prévoir et prévoir pour pourvoir* (to know in order to predict in order to provide). But this is merely one kind of knowledge, one of the three kinds which Max Scheler distinguished: *Beherrschungswissen* (knowledge for the sake of control, power or action: useful knowledge), *Bildungswissen* (knowledge for the sake of knowledge: knowledge for culture) and *Erlösungswissen* (knowledge for the sake of salvation: spiritual knowledge). Now, to be sure, economics has little connection with salvation, but I do not like to have it appraised entirely for its contributions to practical action and to material improvements for mankind. If economics helps to answer questions which are asked only out of intellectual curiosity and for no practical reason, we should duly recognize its contribution. I mention this because I hold that economists know a good deal that will satisfy intellectual curiosity, even if it may not serve practical action. I may digress to say that natural scientists also, God bless them for it, spend plenty of time on the accumulation of *Bildungswissen,* or useless knowledge—for example, when they try to answer such questions as why the sky is blue, or how old is the earth, or what stuff is in the center of the earth.

If we look over the body of knowledge called economics, we find that it has to serve several functions and that we may distinguish different types of economic knowledge according to the service it can render to the economists:

1. Knowledge enabling them to advise on actions designed to improve the well-being of people
2. Knowledge enabling them to make unconditional predictions (even if these predictions should not help in improving human welfare)

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3. Knowledge enabling them to make hypothetical predictions (even if these predictions should never become practical because of an impossibility of discerning or ascertaining beforehand the actual existence of the assumed conditions)
4. Knowledge enabling them to give causal explanations of past events (even if these explanations should not improve the chances of making predictions of future events)
5. Knowledge enabling them to establish past events, situations or processes as historical "facts" or "data."

The last two types of economic knowledge allow us to write economic history: to establish interesting facts of the past and their causal connections. The first two types of knowledge allow us to become economic advisers and forecasters, hence, to be really "useful." The middle type is the preoccupation of the economic theorist: as he constructs abstract models of hypothetical processes effected and affected by hypothetical conditions (with the processes and conditions checked for their correspondence with available observations), he provides the theories which underlie the other types of knowledge, the practical or useful ones concerned with the future and the impractical or cultural ones concerned with the past. There is, as a matter of fact, a considerable division of labor between practical, theoretical and historical economists. The theorists and historians are understandably irked when the question of whether economists know anything is answered exclusively on the basis of their success as advisers and forecasters.

V

But, forgetting my devotion to the purely intellectual and cultural side of knowledge, I shall now adopt the attitude of materialistic pragmatism and ask how useful the knowledge of economics is in our society.

I shall not attempt to examine whether and to what extent the enormous growth in the economic welfare of this nation has been furthered or aided by our knowledge of economics. I shall merely argue that economics, for better or for worse, is being used all the time; indeed, that there is no way of avoiding it.

This is especially true for governmental action. Most of the

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bills and acts of Congress have economic objectives or implications, and the legislators cannot help employing in their considerations whatever economic knowledge they command.

They have to write a tax bill every year. What part of the funds required should be raised by income taxes, what part by excise taxes? Should there be a corporate income tax in addition to personal income taxes? Should there be a federal sales tax? How progressive should be the rate structure of the income tax? Will less progressive tax rates increase the incentive to invest in industry? How will higher exemptions from the income tax affect the demand for consumption goods? Why should we have a capital gains tax? Should it be abolished? (After all, the British have none.) Would a sales tax be a more effective check on inflation than the income tax, since the former falls on spending, while the latter falls partly on saving? But does not the sales tax obviously increase prices paid by consumers, while the income tax does not seem to do this? Should we have higher allowances for the depreciation of capital equipment in slack times than in boom times (as they have in Sweden)?

Congress has to decide on a foreign aid program. How will it affect the domestic economy? Should we force aided countries to spend directly in the United States all the dollars loaned or granted, or may they use them for purchases from other countries? Should we compel them to import only in American ships the American goods they buy with the aid money and to insure the shipments through American insurance companies? Should we demand that the aided countries make certain changes in their domestic economic policies?

Congress has to consider bills on the antitrust laws. Should the bill be passed which allows the steel and cement industries to go back to the pricing system which the Supreme Court has declared illegal? What would be the economic effects? Should the act be repealed which, undoing another Supreme Court decision, prohibits all retailers of branded goods from selling below prices agreed between manufacturers and other retailers? Would it help the smaller retailers against the chain stores, and if so, should it be done if it hurts the consumer?

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Congress has to legislate on bank regulation and credit control. What limits should be imposed on the power of the banking system to inflate the purchasing power of the nation, and what restrictions on particular kinds of credit, such as consumers' installment loans or loans to stock market investors?

All these questions and many others must be resolved in some way; an intelligent person cannot make up his mind in favor of one bill against another before he has come to some conclusions about the underlying economic questions. I do not contend that all legislators are intelligent; in all probability most of them rely on others to make up their minds for them, and those upon whom they rely may be concerned chiefly with the private interests of particular groups. But in furthering some vested interests, someone must apply economic reasoning of some sort. It may not be the best reasoning; it may sometimes be based on economic theories held by the last generation and abandoned by up-to-date economists in favor of better theories. I suspect that most of our doctors treat patients on the basis of theories which are not quite up-to-date. But in their work they use what they know, and the same is true for our economic practitioners. Perhaps it is unfortunate that most economic practitioners usually know much less than what is already known among the research economists, but on the other hand, this may spare the country the bad effects of policies that might be urged by the pundits under the influence of fads which temporarily dominate their thinking.

In any event, however incomplete our knowledge of economics, however modest the part of it which is available for application to economic policy, and however small the part of that which is actually brought to bear upon policies in the interest of society rather than special groups, there can be no doubt that there is a body of economic knowledge in constant use. It is, moreover, a growing body of knowledge. That does not mean that there is any reason to be satisfied with it. On the contrary, the faster we learn, the more we appreciate the incompleteness of our knowledge and the more doubtful we become of its definitiveness. But the fact that fast progress increases the rate of obsolescence should not induce us to minimize the value of what we now think we know.

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Crystallization

DON GORDON

1.

Expires on the windowpane
one petal
of the hard flower of frost;

This particle of the universe
contains events, temperatures,
shining lines as leaves, as stars.

While a man breathes in,
breathes out,
its history begins and dies.

It is brief: it is enough:
the nature of a crystal
is a quiet cold explosion.

2.

The wingless bees are broken
to the metal hive, the state:
they crawl with honey
for the armored queen;
they may not hum or fly.

Nor may the ear accept the thoughtful music
nor in the eye new continents arise;

✪ The poetry of DON GORDON has appeared in a number of magazines and anthologies. He is the author of two volumes of poems, *Statement* and *Civilian Poems.*

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the closed the dominant mind
expires
in a final cold internal glitter.

The instant of frost
lovely on glass or tree
is apt only in its world.

The state is viable and warm
when young:
in the age of crystal
even the brute stones
are wrung by the glacier.

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Thomas Wolfe in Berlin

H. M. LEDIG-ROWOHLT

IN HIS POSTHUMOUSLY PUBLISHED NOVEL, *You Can't Go Home Again,* Thomas Wolfe wrote: "Lloyd McHarg was, of course, one of the chief figures in American letters, and now, at the zenith of his career, when he had won the greatest ovation one could win, he had seized the occasion, which most men would have employed for purposes of self-congratulation, to praise enthusiastically the work of an obscure young writer who was a total stranger to him and who had written only one book."

Lloyd McHarg is of course none other than Sinclair Lewis, who had so highly praised Wolfe's first novel, *Look Homeward, Angel,* at the Nobel Prize award in Stockholm in 1930. Furthermore, he had drawn his German publisher's attention to the young writer's work, and Ernst Rowohlt had eagerly accepted Wolfe's novel after another important Berlin house had just turned it down. The last feature editor of the Berlin *Vossische Zeitung,* Dr. Monty Jacobs, took a chance and ran it as a pre-publication serial. The experiment was a success: it was the swan song, as it were, of old Auntie Voss. When the book appeared, it was enthusiastically received by all the serious German reviewers who were covertly opposed to cultural *Gleichschaltung,* and Ernst Rowohlt took the opportunity of inviting Wolfe to Berlin. (In the winter of 1934 Wolfe was on the run, as it were, from the American publication of his new novel, *Of Time and the River*; he had fled to London, where he met Sinclair Lewis for the first time.) So it was in the spring of 1935 that I first met him.

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It was a bright, peaceful summer, in the days when we still considered Berlin a busy metropolis. Wolfe had unexpectedly stopped off at Hanover—pursuing some amorous adventure, he told me later with a secret smile—and he arrived in Berlin a day late. I had accepted an invitation to a reception for a well-known foreign correspondent at the American Embassy, and had left a message at the office that Wolfe should just come along. Martha Dodd, the daughter of Ambassador William Dodd, had already been primed for his arrival. The animated conversation was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a gigantic, embarrassed man who was introduced as the expected writer. I shall never forget the scene: the dark, imposing head towering above all the guests, the almost coquettishly deferential modesty of the giant who was soon the center of the party, and who was blushingly putting himself out to say something friendly all the time and to brush aside any compliments.

Thomas Wolfe did not bestow his friendship lightly. But soon the two of us were affording a queer sight on the Kurfürstendamm between Uhlandstrasse and the Gedächtniskirche: the boyish, happy giant (for a joke, a press photographer put a traffic cop under his arm) and my own slight figure. I soon got to love him as a big brother, and apparently he returned my affection. As he liked to speak only what he called his "cab-driver's German" to simple folk, for whose fates and faces he had an unquenchable curiosity, I was obliged to summon up all my English, which he was later to reproduce with such phonographic exactness. We had as yet no hint of the dangerous uniformity hidden behind Berlin's happy, summery busyness. After New York, Wolfe enjoyed its restful quiet, and from day to day he became more open. One afternoon, in the garden of the Alte Klause, he described how he had got involved in a real *Oktoberfest* fight in Munich and how he, the giant, had thought his opponent dead and how, bleeding from many wounds, he had mistaken the police hospital for a prison hospital. Vividly and with grotesquely exaggerated humor, he described his qualms of conscience and his mental distress, very much as this episode appears later in the *Oktoberfest* section of his novel *The Web and the Rock.*

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Our conversations that summer remained predominantly unpolitical. The enthusiastic press he got from stand-pat German friends transfigured all Berlin for him. But he kept uneasily referring to the lack of news from New York about the success of his book *Of Time and the River*, which Scribner's had published in March. He longed for the relief, the liberation of a big success. In Brooklyn in 1929, he had furtively bought at a kiosk the newspapers with the first reviews of *Look Homeward, Angel.* As he crossed the streets he had counted the passing cars (an odd or even number decided whether the criticism was favorable or unfavorable). He had not read the papers in the street, but had hurried home, anxiously avoiding stepping on the lines between the paving stones for fear of bad luck. There was something comical and touching in the way he described his shyness of criticism, and with that mighty fist that had nearly cost some Bavarian thickhead his life, he furiously thumped on a little marble table in the Romanische Café, because critics in the United States had declared that he was just copying from life, and merely from his own life, at that.

Had the big gamble come off this time? "I think the real discovery of America is still ahead of us," he was to say in his last book.

And he, the mason's son from Asheville, North Carolina, who had fled from his own eulogies, from America to Europe, was now in Berlin longing to discover and conquer America.

Night was his time, the North his longing. We climbed up to my little foxhole of an attic flat on the Kurfürstendamm, in which he looked grotesque and gigantic. He leaned against the mantelpiece or squeezed out into the little roof garden, enjoying the sea of city lights under the starry sky and raving about New York.

And later, when we sat on the other side of the Kurfürstendamm, under the lime trees whose leaves looked Schweinfurt-green in the artificial light, he told me how, back home in the little mountain town of Asheville, he had heard the trains going north in the nighttime, and how they had always tempted him to go north too, into the darkness of the big cities, into the atmosphere of murder and prostitution. One day he would write the novel of a night express: he would describe the rush of the night-black streams,

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the singing of the rails in the clear-sounding darkness, the roar of wheels over bridges and past houses, the manifold echo in the changing landscape. And I had the impression that those very trains were scurrying by like shadows across his big broad face. He was proud to be a child of simple folk, and he told me of his brothers and his boyhood friends, till almost in dismay I realized that practically all the characters in his books were really alive. One was now an automobile agent, another was a teacher. They had their own existence and at the same time they lived in him.

He talked while the traffic in the summery Kurfürstendamm night gradually went to sleep. He drank one glass of Moselle after another and went on telling me about his mother, who kept a little boardinghouse (for that reason, he didn't like to stay in boarding-houses); about the difficulties facing a writer when he tries to write of his own life and experiences; about how shocked the people of Asheville had been over his first novel, and how upset the kindly reader at Scribner's, who suffered from angina pectoris (when Wolfe had put him into a short story the poor man became the laughingstock of New York literary circles and, as a consequence, had nearly been driven to suicide). And suddenly he asked sharply how we, Ernst Rowohlt and I, would react to such a literary portrait. Rather embarrassed, I said that we would never be so upset as the Scribner's reader, but that we would feel honored to pose as models for literary reality. At the time I didn't know his habit of memorizing the day's conversations and putting them down of a night, word-perfect and sound-perfect, and I certainly didn't foresee that two years later I might easily have been victimized because of this habit. Anyway, I declared, we were probably not interesting enough for portraits of that kind. Thomas Wolfe laughed.

We left the restaurant, and he showed me how, when he was a newsboy, to save time he would throw the papers a considerable distance into his clients' gardens and would excitedly listen for the slap of the paper against the door. With a few quick gestures he skillfully folded the thick Sunday edition of the *Berliner Tageblatt* into a little package which he threw with sure aim right across the Kurfürstendamm straight into the little garden of my

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house. "Slap" it went, quite clearly in the still of the night, and he laughed like a youngster whose trick has come off.

One unforgettable night, we were in a small artists' *Lokal* in the Kleiststrasse—painters, writers, and young women such as one always finds in that sort of company. Suddenly Thomas Wolfe stood before us, gigantic and beaming, his black hair disheveled. He greeted us loudly, let himself fall into an armchair which groaned under him, and with a wide and jovial gesture he declared to us modest beer-drinkers, "Let's all have some wine—I'm rich!" He was not drunk. He had at last received the awaited letter from New York, and he was intoxicated by the sensational success of his novel *Of Time and the River*. The great gamble that had caused him such anxiety had come off: the American journals published eulogies set out big, with his picture on the front page.

"I'm rich!" said he who was putting up at the Hotel am Zoo with a shabby suitcase and always wore the same dark-brown suit. He was as happy as a child, enjoyed his drinks, seemed like a man set free. We wanted to celebrate the event, so we set off in a big party to the Taverne, the favored *Lokal* of foreign journalists in the Courbièrestrasse. Martha Dodd was there, also in a party. We sat down at the next table, and I wondered why she didn't ask us over. It turned out that she was with Donald Klopfer of Random House, and Klopfer refused to sit at the same table with Germans. I felt as if someone had knocked me on the head: how could a foreigner not distinguish between Germans and Nazis, as we could! For the first time it occurred to me that I was identified with the Nazis, and for the first time I became aware of the gulf that—already, in the summer of 1935—separated us from the rest of the world. I wasn't going to let Klopfer's argument pass: I went over to him and introduced myself. We exchanged a few words about William Faulkner, an author our two houses had in common. But it was a brief and forced conversation, even though Klopfer bit back his feelings enough to shake hands with me. I was upset when I came back to our table, and our former good mood would not return again.

When the party at the neighboring table broke up, Martha whispered furtively to us to come along to coffee at the Embassy.

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It was some while before we got away from the others, and we arrived as day broke. In the spacious hall we stood like guilty schoolboys. Above us on the broad staircase stood Martha Dodd, ostentatiously holding Wolfe's new book, *Of Time and the River.* Rather pathetically she reproached him with destroying his talents as a writer by excessive drinking. Wolfe foamed with rage. Furiously he stormed up the staircase, snatched from her the thick volume that had sealed his fame as a writer, ripped it out of its cover, tore its thousand pages with his bear's paws, and threw the little bits like a shower of confetti out of the window into the steel-blue morning of the Tiergarten. Martha Dodd was terrified at this outburst of rage and cried, "How can a writer do a thing like that!"

But Wolfe didn't seem to hear. Hadn't he put America's "sober bitter colours" into words as Whitman once had, and hadn't he the success he had longed for in black and white in his pocket? With giant strides he stormed through the great room, cursing and swearing, and overwhelming with grim recriminations the unhappy girl, who had thrown herself sobbing on the couch. I was helpless. The tension got on my nerves. Eventually I tried to turn the scene into comedy, and began turning somersaults backward and forward over the soft carpet until Wolfe noticed.

He understood immediately. He rushed over to me, embraced me so heartily, so extravagantly that he nearly crushed me in his strong arms: "Henry, you're a great sport, you're wonderful!"

Martha smiled also. The wicked mood was dissolved. Wolfe sat down by her, quietly begging her forgiveness. I shall never forget how the two of them later stood by the very window out of which he had just thrown the fragments of his book, with the dawn sky behind them above the high treetops of the Tiergarten, and the birds just beginning to sing.

We decided to drive out to the Havel and have breakfast there somewhere. The car was waiting at the door, and in the garden the bits of the torn-up book still lay. I picked up a handful and put them in my pocket as a keepsake (I still have them). We drove out to the Grunewald. The freshness of the early summer morning did us good. As we passed the gloomy Grunewaldsee, on whose

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moor-dark surface the ancient firs were mirrored, two white swans flew up in the shadowy morning stillness, and, simultaneously with their majestic flight, a curious, guttural animal cry of delight came from Wolfe's throat. Joy and ardor played on his powerful face. He who loved the big city above all lived in a mythical harmony with nature. In the Schloss Marquardt the comfortable yellow chairs were still standing on the tables, and instead of waiters, the cleaners had taken charge. For all that, a corner was assigned to us. In a joking mood, Wolfe tore a colored cloth off the table, wrapped it round him with a bold gesture, Indian-fashion, and sat down announcing, "I'm Sitting Bull!" We had a cheerful, noisy breakfast, and returned to town dead tired.

It was still a peaceful summer, though one day Martha Dodd came back from Munich indignant to report that a Jew had been beaten there in the open street and that she had saved him in her car.

Only occasionally did our conversation touch on the murky political situation and on the "Dark Messiah," as Wolfe was later to call Hitler. His political skepticism was still glossed over by joy at his literary success; and besides, he loved Berlin more than any other European capital. He felt how genuine the response was which his mighty figure and his childish lack of affectation awakened everywhere, whether among cab drivers, trolleymen, salesgirls or waiters, or even among German writers, who treated him with respect.

As soon as my work in the office allowed, I would pick him up from the Hotel am Zoo, where a smart little bellhop enjoyed his special affection. Quite often I found him in his hotel room, reading the big Webster's dictionary he always took with him on his travels, reveling in the abundance of the English language and enriching his own vocabulary. He told me about his way of working, and how he would force himself to reconstruct from memory certain rooms in Paris and London, certain people, conversations and situations, down to the slightest detail; how often an overwhelming stream of nostalgic memories would reveal to him the peculiar characteristics of America—how differently the locomotives whistled there and the trains thundered over the bridges—

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indeed, how it was only when he came abroad that the image of America had first become close to his heart, and how he had needed this spatial distance to realize properly the literary truth of his existence.

Our conversations at that time knew no political restrictions: he was already then that "citizen of humanity" that he called himself in a letter shortly before his death. For everyone who came into contact with him in Berlin, he was the embodiment of that free world that we in Hitler's prison were longing for more and more. He was aware of this, and our response was for him the confirmation of his enormous power.

At night we strolled like two dissimilar brothers through Berlin's West End. I still see him at Anne Menz's on the Augsburgstrasse, eyeing the handsome waitress behind the bar and winking comically and rubbing his knife and fork together like a butcher's knife and steel: "She's a fine piece, I'll cut a slice of her." I see him embracing the trees of the Kurfürstendamm with panic ardor and praying for a big woman appropriate to his size.

The North was his longing. I could not keep him, though I seriously doubted if he would ever return to Germany. He longed for the North, for big handsome women. So one morning he left for Copenhagen. I did not feel happy at the station. I felt that the most important things between us still remained unsaid. I walked by him, ran by him, stayed behind, waved, and did not notice that my face was distorted by the pain of parting and wet with tears. Only later was I to read that Wolfe had noticed it all too well.

In the Olympic summer of 1936, under a provocative forest of swastika flags, Berlin had once again resumed the appearance of an international metropolis. On July 3 we received a letter from Wolfe, posted in New York on June 22, in which he wrote: "I am working hard and getting a lot done; but I confess I am sometimes tempted to get on a fast ship and come over to pay you all a visit, and perhaps see something of the Olympic games. North-german Lloyd has written me several letters and suggested that I could earn part or most of my passage over if I could write an

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article for a travel magazine which they publish; and if you and Ernst could sell a few copies of *Von Zeit und Strom,* may be, I could take you all up and down Kurfürstendamm or to Schlichters'; but get thee behind me, Satan—the idea is too tempting—I had my fling last year, perhaps it is better now that I keep at work."

Meanwhile, *Of Time and the River* had appeared in Hans Schiebelhuth's translation. It promised to be a big success with the critics. But despite enthusiastic reviews, only about four thousand copies were sold up to the beginning of the war. As *Look Homeward, Angel* had sold eight to nine thousand copies, and we had not enough foreign currency to pay him his royalties, I cabled Wolfe that same day to come and use up his money in Berlin.

Three weeks later he was with us, telling us in the old extravagant way how my telegram had torn him away in the middle of his work. That same evening he had impetuously gone down to the docks, and it wasn't till he got there that he discovered he hadn't enough money for the journey.

That evening he was to go to the Embassy, where a reception in honor of Charles Lindbergh was taking place. He skipped around the office in delight, but suddenly he fell into deep despair: he had no clean dress shirt. I calmed him down: nothing could be simpler—we would buy one. It hadn't occurred to me that the Berlin shops of 1936 no longer catered to the measurements of the Potsdam Guard of 1736. Desperately we ran along the Tauentzienstrasse shortly before closing time. It was the same scene in every shop: humbly Wolfe would bend down to let the obliging shopgirl measure his neck; then would follow shrugs of regret that no dress shirt of this titanic size was in stock. Wolfe's temper got worse and worse. This seemingly hopeless hunt was calculated to bring to mind again all the infuriating trouble his size had been causing him for years.

He complained of the miserable rainy day that made him see everything as gray on gray; he cursed the provincialism of Berlin and he cursed Hitler—fortunately in an American that neither the new gentlemen of the Tauentzienstrasse nor the walls of the former Jewish firms understood.

At last we landed up near the Wittenbergplatz in an elegant

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shop where they took Wolfe for a famous athlete. Again the same humility on the part of the grumbling giant, again the salesgirl's polite shrug, till at last the urgency of our requirements sank into the manager's skull, and he decided to violate a normal dress shirt. Immediately the despair of the giant to whom the world could offer nothing made-to-measure changed to high glee. Before his eyes a shirt was cut down the back; the sleeves marked for suitable insertions; the excessive size noted down; the starched front, at least, preserved; the whole ingenious patchwork to be delivered at his hotel in time. In his excess of gratitude he wrote his name in the pompous visitors' book which was daily displayed in the shopwindow throughout the Olympic games, and which hitherto had featured only international sporting stars. So beside the healthy bodies, a healthy mind proudly stepped: "With sincere thanks for help in urgency. Thomas Wolfe, writer."

Cheerfully we walked back along the Tauentzienstrasse, and Thomas Wolfe, who was known on both sides of the Atlantic as the Homer of modern America, sang in a stentorian voice a lot of frivolous nonsense which—like the previous curses—none of the astonished passers-by understood.

Because of the Olympic games, the German press was allowed to publicize certain international figures and events. In the office we naturally made good use of this on Wolfe's behalf, though he made no secret of what he thought of Hitler's activities. Patiently and modestly he submitted to many stupid questions. An interview with a big daily paper was arranged for August 6, to take place in Wolfe's hotel room. The interviewer appeared in the company of a newspaper artist, a big handsome blonde who was obviously to Wolfe's fancy. He answered the journalist's questions absent-mindedly, while the artist sat by quietly, seeming to fix in her mind every movement of his lively features. "Berlin?" was an inevitable question. "Wonderful," declared Wolfe superficially, with an admiring glance at the blonde. "If there was no Germany, it would be necessary to invent one. It's a magical country. I know Hildesheim, Nuremberg, Munich, the architecture, the soul of the place, the glory of its history and its art. Two hundred years ago my

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forefathers emigrated from southern Germany to America." Perhaps fleeing from that glorious history. . . ?

I was relieved that this particular promontory had been safely rounded, and I recounted—with Wolfe only supporting me absently—the episode of the Munich *Oktoberfest* in 1928, and finally the incident of the dress shirt. With this interview, I believed I had been of service to Wolfe the writer, and was rather surprised to be confronted with Wolfe the man, who questioned me enthusiastically about the handsome blonde and seemed delighted with her imposing appearance. I took the whole thing as a passing fancy, and still did on the next day when we sat in the Café Bristol, listening to the radio transmissions from the Olympic Stadium, with Wolfe shouting enthusiastically when the United States won a new medal.

I bought the paper, calmly skipped through the interview, and handed it to Wolfe. He did not read it. True to his custom, he put it in his pocket to read in his hotel room. Next day he was extremely angry and indignant; the blonde's drawing had offended him deeply. He found himself disfigured beyond recognition. He declared with comical pride that in his mother's opinion he was the most handsome of her boys, and suddenly, after a furious glance in the mirror, he asked me in German: "Habe ich ein Schweinsgesicht?" I laughed, but there was no consoling him. Eventually, in all seriousness he declared the blonde had been bribed by the Gestapo. Lately he had come across so many frightening details about the National Socialist regime that he, too, began to suffer under the weight of personal mistrust and political suspicion. Perhaps to divert himself and to forget the big blonde, he wanted to take a trip to Potsdam. I explained that I was not a qualified guide to Potsdam, but he insisted. We brought my wife along, but though we made every effort to cheer Wolfe up, the excursion was an utter failure. At odds with himself, he quarreled with us too; he seemed to have eyes for nothing, and finally he asked just why we were dragging him around all this sober royal Prussian pomposity.

Not until evening did the celebrated Potsdamer Stangenbier

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and all kinds of sausage specialties make him more peaceably disposed. Even so, on the way back to the station, he would stop for a minute or two by a shopwindow or some mirrored advertising display, and comically craning his neck, he would angrily and thoughtfully compare his handsome, mighty head with the "Schweinsgesicht" with which the artist had given the lie to his mother's opinion.

Throughout this visit the "Dark Messiah" was the recurring subject of our conversations. Wolfe had observed him from the American Embassy box at the Stadium. From Martha Dodd, he got to know more of his deeds and methods than we Germans officially knew. He feared still greater mischief to come, and he realized bitterly that everywhere the men of good will were being oppressed by the men of power, and that Hitler was unleashing nothing but evil in the world.

By these conversations, I came to realize to what a great extent we were being affected by the lack of freedom, and how powerless the individual was. I spoke of the temptation to escape from political pressure by fleeing abroad; I talked insistently to Wolfe, trying to encourage him to write a great novel by which he as a writer, not as a political propagandist, should appeal to the conscience of mankind. He smiled: just because he loved mankind above everything, he would be obliged to be political in such a book. I begged him, for daily he experienced what a source of encouragement his books were to German readers. He had an obligation to these Germans, who were appealing to him. But as soon as he attacked the German government, all his books would be banned in Germany! He understood what I was trying to say, that I was not speaking as a profit-seeking publisher, but as an incorrigible idealist who, in Germany's isolation, did not want to miss the comfort of his books—in short, as that "strange saint" who was later to figure in his account of this summer.

He shook his head. "A man must write what he has to," he declared later in that same account. "A man must do as his convictions order him." I was silent and sad. Between us was already opening the gulf that separated Germany from the democratic

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countries, and across it we were greeting each other fraternally for the last time. I thought of the many friends who were already no longer within reach.

I was melancholy and depressed, and, though even inside the American Embassy we had to be cautious before the servants, there, behind locked doors, I spoke of my personal troubles and of how under the National Socialist despotism it was becoming increasingly difficult to lead one's private life without interference. Wolfe consoled me, and at the same time he was horrified. Through my own example it became particularly clear to him how much the tyranny of National Socialism forced us to abandon our individual rights, and how much we Germans were being driven into lonely waters where there was scarcely any communication with each other—became clear to him, and to many Americans who barely nine months later were to become acquainted with all the "highly treasonable" details of our talks.

A big party was given in Wolfe's honor, in Rowohlt's private flat on Rankestrasse, and all literary folk who were still of free opinion were invited, but it showed very clearly to what an extent the tree of our literature was already stripped of its leaves. All the great names of German letters had emigrated. Instead, the unfortunate woman artist was there.

I feared the worst, but Wolfe was soon very intimate with the stately blonde. His rage over the "Schweinsgesicht" was forgotten. He hardly spoke to anyone else, and he left the party in her company. I did not take this flirtation very seriously, and so I was rather surprised next day when Wolfe announced, with comically defiant earnestness, that he and the blonde artist were going off to the Tyrol together. I said nothing against it. For the moment at least, he seemed to be under the influence of some great passion. Wolfe went off, and returned to Berlin alone at the beginning of September. He was cross and disappointed, and I gathered from random remarks that he had left his blonde traveling companion standing in some Alpine meadow and come back. I asked no questions, but I thought I deduced from his allusions that everything essentially feminine irresistibly attracted and at the same

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time repelled him. He spoke of bitter experiences in New York, of importunate and ambitious women who had caused him much anger and had sharpened his mistrust.

I do not know whether he ever again saw this woman whom he had loved very much for a short time; neither do I know whether some political reason lay behind their disagreement. The only remarkable thing is that this experience apparently left in Wolfe some poisoned sting. He was irritable and oversensitive; he wanted to get away, to go home via France, but the homeward journey was delayed time and again by currency difficulties. He no longer made any secret of his animosity toward Germany and National Socialism. His mistrust was nourished when Rudolf Grossmann wanted to make a portrait of him for *Querschnitt* and arrived with a man unknown to me, who invited Wolfe to visit a labor camp. Wolfe got out of the invitation, and I later advised him to keep away from anything that could in any way be used as Nazi propaganda.

The poisoned atmosphere must have seemed completely impenetrable to him when we met a literary man in the Romanische Café, whom we nicknamed "The Prince of Darkness." He made the priggish remark about Hemingway that he was stuck and showed no signs of developing any more; and, moreover, he permitted himself to make tactless remarks about Wolfe's brown hat. Wolfe was furious. I told him a number of details about the man, who was absolutely no Nazi and who emigrated shortly afterward. But the tragedy was slowly dawning on Wolfe. "It was the creeping paralysis of mistrust that crippled and infected all relations between men and peoples," I was later to read in his book. "It was a poison against which there was no antidote, and from which no salvation was to be found." I tried to explain this latent condition: I wanted to make him understand how careful one had to be, even with literary friends—with the result that Wolfe was soon suspicious of us too. He thought it improbable that, despite all the literary reverberations, so few copies of his books had been sold. Though officially the "creeping paralysis of mistrust" between us had subsided, it went on smoldering underground.

After Wolfe had missed his ship several times, partly through his own fault, partly through delay over the granting of currency,

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we went on a spree in the old way for the last time. Wolfe seemed to be the prey of some inexplicable uneasiness, and the drunker he got, the more touchy he became. Suddenly the "Schweinsgesicht" worried him again. Then the question of royalties came up, without our managing to bring any light to that dense thicket of misunderstanding. Wolfe used his early-morning departure as an excuse to hurry away. I was helpless and unhappy. I went after him, and found him in a bar in the company of a doubtful girl and a silly youngster. He was furious that I had tracked him down: "Why do you spy on me?" But I wouldn't let him chase me away, for I was afraid that in his irritable mood he might say something indiscreet and miss his train. We drank some more, and in the street he started a quarrel. Eventually I left him in a drunken rage. This time I had no tears. Our parting seemed as absurd as everything else around me. The creeping poison seemed to have destroyed our friendship too. Dead tired, I staggered to bed and slept well into the bright day. In the afternoon I found a note from him at the office: "Never mind our trouble. Love to both of you. Tom."

A friendly post card from Paris followed, then a sparse correspondence, and finally many of our letters remained unanswered. Early in 1937, Martha Dodd returned to Berlin after a visit to the United States. She rang one afternoon and asked me to see her. She talked of New York and of Wolfe, about whom she was worried. I figured in his new novel; that was why she had rung me. Flattered, but somewhat anxious too, I lightly passed it off. She remained terribly serious: the way in which Wolfe had presented me and my conversations was rather dangerous for me personally; I had better read it for myself. And she handed me a copy of the *New Republic*, which was lying on the table.

Right on the front page was a bold reference to Thomas Wolfe's new novel about "Nazi Germany." The published extract was called "I Have a Thing to Tell You." I feared the worst. This was the phrase with which I had begun all my "atrocity stories," all my discourses on the political situation. I read on, and went alternately hot and cold with shock. In this short story, which is

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included word for word in his last novel, *You Can't Go Home Again,* Thomas Wolfe had worked over all our conversations with phonographic exactness, with a few deviations, of course, from reality. He had brought together his visits of both summers, 1935 and 1936, and had set them in the Olympic summer, so that the furious ill-humor of 1936 was dampened or even neutralized by the easy, cheerful mood of 1935. For all that, any careful observer must have been able to reconstruct the reality of it down to the last detail.

Though I appeared as a librarian under the name of Franz Heilig, and spoke a dry, schooled-on-Shakespeare English, all my personal circumstances were described exactly. Reading it took my breath away and brought the tears to my eyes. Wolfe had spitted me with his pen, had given a merciless X-ray picture of me with all the constraint, all the inner contradictions that the tactical juggling of those years involved and that he, as an American, simply could not understand. If these facts became known, if some unfriendly contemporary revealed the secret of Franz Heilig, then my fate was sealed. I was confused and shattered.

The latent fear in which we were living then became a naked terror. Martha Dodd took a serious view of it, for she knew that the *New Republic* was read and "gutted" in Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry. She advised me to leave Germany, with her help, as quickly as possible.

I needed time to think. Rowohlt calmed me down and tried to belittle the whole affair, and as he was curious about his own literary portrait, he proposed that I should first of all translate the text. After a restless night, during which I destroyed many valuable letters and souvenirs, or at least hid them before the Gestapo pounce, I set to work; and as I translated, I was again moved by the human greatness that spoke out of every line of Thomas Wolfe. "Not as a political propagandist, but as a writer," I had implored him some nine months before. Here indeed, a writer had seized on an outstanding political situation, had "written what he had to write," and had made his appeal to the conscience of mankind. We who had spent two summers with him were clay in his hands. He had shaped the clay and had brought

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it to life with the spirit of an objective truth of which we, with our prejudices, were hardly capable.

I was not offended like the Scribner's reader, though I was placed in a far more dangerous position than ever he was. I was faced with a movingly objective image of myself. I understood what Thomas Wolfe had not directly expressed. I understood too, now, why he no longer wrote to us, why he did not dare to send us news. I understood how imperceptibly and how fatefully our view of the world, of life and of ourselves had threatened to become changed and falsified under the pressure of National Socialism. I thought everyone must recognize who Franz Heilig was. I could no longer sleep peacefully. Every ring at the door of my flat made me start up in fright. I was afraid, and still I stayed in Germany. Later, I heard that "I Have a Thing to Tell You" caused quite a stir in the United States. Luckily for me, the fragment remained unknown in Germany for the time being, until Will Vesper referred to its publication in the *New Republic*. I thought my last hour had come indeed when Gestapo officials appeared at the office one afternoon. Crazy ideas of escape chased through my head—excuses, intellectually intricate counterarguments. But their visit was "only" concerned with the confiscation of the book *Die Grüne Front*, which had attacked the reactionary German agrarian policy. They wanted to know what had become of its author, Erwin Topf.

It did not occur to the Gestapo to look for the original of Franz Heilig. But Franz Heilig was often close by me—long after Thomas Wolfe's early death in September, 1938, which shook me more than the events of Godesberg and Munich that sealed the fate of Germany.

Amidst the later desolation I recalled the ominous ending of "I Have a Thing to Tell You," which I knew by heart: "Therefore," he thought, "old master, wizard Faust, old father, of the ancient and swarm-haunted mind of men, old earth, old German land with all the measure of your truth, your glory, beauty, magic, and your ruin; and dark Helen burning in our blood, great queen and mistress, sorceress—dark land, dark land, old ancient earth I love—farewell!"

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A Warning to Editors of *Mother Goose*

STEPHEN P. DUNN

The known and friendly monster from the closet,
A trusted visitor, casual and sure
Of not disturbing, always escapes, though banished
By the nervous grown-ups. When the shades are drawn,
The child feels darkness flow and fold around him—
A warm enclosing wave. All the night's creatures—
The wounded mice and murdered robins—gather
Around his bed, and teach him their own language
For saying old sad things in.

Take care, meddlers;
Their language is not yours; you do not know
The child's unconscious joyous cruelty,
And you would take away its instrument—
The knife of sacrifice to the gods below—
And offer him only bent straw in return.
Though your old women are kind to animals,
Your dwarves all sweetness under a cold frog's hide,
The child will love the horror that he knows.

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Social Science and the Humanists

BERNARD ROSENBERG

THE WORD "SOCIOLOGY," coined by Auguste Comte, combines a Latin root, *socius*, with the Greek *logos*. This fact prompted Comte's friend John Stuart Mill to remark that sociology was a bastard science; and, indeed, it has struggled for legitimacy ever since. In certain circles the unpedigreed offspring of Comte's mind is still an object of scorn and odium, to be feared as a dangerous upstart on the one hand and ridiculed as a preposterous clown on the other. Its siblings, as the barbarous wreckers of our otherwise pellucid language would call them, are likewise contemptible. Whoever belongs to the social science clan is as suspect as any member of the loathsome Barnabas family in Kafka's *The Castle*. Mortimer Adler once asserted that pragmatism was a greater threat to man than Nazism. This sentiment was echoed by Mr. Hearst and re-echoed by Mr. Luce. Now come the humanists (and what man will deny being a humanist—the dehumanist? the antihumanist?) to declare that underlying totalitarianism and its threat to America is sociology, that little bastard with so many brothers and sisters and collateral cousins.

A compendium of such views and others of equal sophistication may be found in a recent AMERICAN SCHOLAR Forum (Spring, 1952) on "The Application of Scientific Method to the Study of Human Behavior." One might say that this forum requires examination because it expresses a widespread attitude, but to do so would be to court the charge of statisticism. The following, therefore, will be based upon what five responsible scholars have said, without regard to their representativeness.

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On the record is Hiram Haydn, editor of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, who begins by saying:

> As you gentlemen know, I am a substitute chairman. I shall not waste time apologizing for my lack of qualifications to be moderator of this particular discussion.

The editor was addressing himself to: B. F. Skinner, professor of psychology at Harvard University; Crane Brinton, McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History at Harvard University; A. L. Kroeber, distinguished anthropologist; and Joseph Wood Krutch, Brander Matthews Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University. Unlike Haydn, three of the four participants *do* feel apologetic. They run for cover from guilt by association with social science. Brinton simply denies its reality. The author of a recently revised book called *The Anatomy of Revolution,* in which *uniformities* of human behavior, partly derived from the systematic sociology of Vilfredo Pareto, are formulated, now contends that they do not exist. Human behavior is unpredictable:

> Although this is a somewhat silly illustration, the problem really is this: the engineer can predict with accuracy the behavior of his materials. He knows what the various girders will do, etc. But if human beings are involved, there is a difference. One girder will not conduct a love affair with another girder, but with human beings this happens, and the unpredictable enters the picture in a way it will not with girders.

Krutch, the man of letters, is absolved beforehand. As for Kroeber, "I do not consider myself a social scientist. . . ." What then is this "distinguished anthropologist?" "I do plead guilty to being a sort of humanist. . . . And I think you, Mr. Skinner, are a natural scientist who is interested in the individual and in the human organism and human behavior." Skinner does not demur, because as Kroeber points out, "That is not a slur. The other way, of course, if anything." Small wonder the chairman is eventually led to exclaim:

> Well, this is fine for the feelings of everybody present, Mr. Kroeber, but I shudder to think at this moment what our readers are going to say when we tackle the subject of the social sciences and do not have anyone who is allowed to be classified as a social scientist.

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Having thus dispelled any suggestion of expertness, these gentlemen are free to deal with the subject in their own humanistic manner. They speak of James, Pierce, Mill and Heisenberg to make a point which is well taken about "the unpredictable element in man and in the universe as a whole." Modern science has long taken this factor into account without doing itself any appreciable harm. Referring to Pierce, Krutch observes:

> He made the suggestion that there might be only free atoms in nature, that what was called the law of gravitation simply meant that atoms, in the course of time, had gotten into the habit of falling—a confirmed habit, but not one which could be absolutely relied upon as necessarily continuing in the same way.

Very well. All of science deals with material about whose complete predictability there is never any assurance. For this reason, its conclusions are tentative, relative, hypothetical, and not only modifiable but reversible as well. It is to be doubted that any serious student of the subject would care to challenge the provisional character of scientific laws. They do not yield the kind of truth vouchsafed those whose source of knowledge is divination or revelation. Instead, they are formulated in terms of probability, or warranted assertibility. Modern science has largely de-absolutized and mathematicized itself. Given conditions *a* and *b*, *c* is likely to occur with a certain frequency. Every branch of science makes propositions of this kind. Emphasizing that fact merely underscores the essential identity of physical science and social science, not their distinctness. However, a premise may be used by our humanist friends to demonstrate the opposite of what it clearly proves. This is perhaps their prerogative, since they repudiate the methods of social science. Still, we are entitled to see where it all leads.

Krutch agrees with James in denying that "even in the realm of matter" this is a universe "in which nothing new, no new event, could ever take place." The argument comes to this: (a) natural phenomena, as understood at present, are not wholly predictable; (b) human behavior, as understood at present, is not wholly predictable; (c) therefore, physical science, which studies

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the former, is generically different from social science, which studies the latter. This reasoning would quickly lead readers into Cloud Cuckoo Land if Brinton did not come to the rescue—and take them there by another route. Haydn asserts that there is an "infinite" variety among individuals; then he modifies this to "not infinite perhaps but a very wide diversity." Brinton is dissatisfied with so moderate a statement. "I think that the real question is about infinite variety—that really holds. Mr. Haydn should not have changed it. And remember, if they are infinite, obviously they are not predictable."

This position has the effect of eliminating an inconsistency while producing another one wrapped in a *reductio ad absurdum*. For it must now be maintained that while natural phenomena are somewhat unpredictable, human behavior is absolutely unpredictable. The one supplies data for science, the other does not; one operates in a partly lawful area, the other in a completely unlawful area. If this is really so, we *had* better give up the ghost.

But is it? More likely we have here a concatenation of fallacies which would not follow one from another even if they were truths. It is perfectly clear that every human being in all his particularity differs from every other human being. No two persons are altogether identical. Neither are any two roses nor any two cows nor any two genes nor any two fossils. Shall we therefore strike botany, zoology, genetics and paleontology from the rolls of science? Actually, infinite variety and the technique of classification based on similarity go hand in hand. The scientist classifies and cross-classifies, selects features common to otherwise dissimilar objects, deliberately conceptualizes and, in so doing, carries out an essential function of his enterprise.

Is all this inapplicable to the interaction of human beings, either when it is performed or when it is studied? Certainly not. Indeed, culture, which is a concept no more "real" than, let us say, a quantum or humanism, could not exist save for man's capacity to abstract. Of course, he does this on a more sophisticated and self-conscious level in science. But he does it every day without giving much thought to the matter. Consider language. Man alone is able

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to engage in symbolic intercommunication with his fellows. He expels air from his lungs, now and again causes a slight disturbance in the atmosphere, and thereby arbitrarily endows a circumambient world with meaning and value. Men who have been socialized use their articulatory apparatus to utter sounds which the linguist, a social scientist, calls morphemes, that is, meaningful units of speech strung together in accordance with convention. No other organism can do this, and no socialized human being can do less. It is the primary datum of social science and obvious to anyone who gives it a moment's reflection. A system of symbols, rules governing their sequence, allowable combinations and permutations, syntactical arrangement—all these are peculiarly human contrivances, permitting the species to accumulate, transmit and perpetuate what social science calls culture, namely, the totality of specifically human experiences.

Let us note, however, that without the faculty of abstraction none of this would be possible. No baby is exactly the same as any other baby. But the word or concept "baby" is exceedingly useful if we mean whatever distinguishes every baby from all non-babies. Suppose we needed a different word for each baby in the population, and so on through the whole list of nouns. Such a "language" would be unusable. Classification based on the presence of similar attributes, the first step in science, is also the substance of what we constantly and necessarily do in our daily intercourse with others. Similarly, each man's uniqueness is wholly compatible with the human condition in general. They are both susceptible of scientific observation. Snowflakes may be infinitely variable; still they lend themselves to meteorological description. Whatever their shapes and sizes, when they come in flurries we are affected by them in much the same way. This is also true of men, who, for all their differences, are distinguishable from every other species and who, more than any other, depend upon what our participants deprecate: mutual expectations, shared understandings, reliability of stimulus and response—in a word, predictability. We behave, as a rule, according to pre-established norms from which only a limited amount of defection is possible. Were it otherwise, culture—and

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man as its distinctive bearer—would inevitably perish. Brinton, Kroeber, Skinner and Krutch are academic men. They know that it would be impossible for them to function in the classroom without a prior, if tacit, agreement concerning their role and that of their students, when it is appropriate to act, and in what way. The situation is defined, it is understood; and for the effective transmission of knowledge in our society, it permits of only the slightest deviation. A forum is impossible unless its participants know, elicit and abide by the type of conduct they have learned to exhibit on such occasions. Even to deny this proposition within the context of a forum, moderated by the chairman playing his socially acceptable role, is to corroborate it. Let Brinton behave as unconventionally as men, in his judgment, always behave and there will be no forum. Let them behave so unconventionally and thus unpredictably in general and there will be no society.

Skinner sees a predicament and complains that the sociologist has:

> . . . seized hold of the notion of statistical prediction as a way out. I am very much concerned about it, and I tend more and more to confine myself to a sample of one in my statistics. Unless something is true of the individual, it tends not to be very important from my point of view. That is exactly the difference between the insurance company's actuarial tables, which will prove that a certain number of people will die in Manhattan tonight, and the dilemma of a doctor who wants to know whether his patient is going to die or not. He cannot go to the insurance companies to find out. . . . Social sciences tend to deal with actuarial statistics about groups.

To handle this indictment an abecedarian recitation of fact would seem to be in order. Social science is not more than a hundred years old. Before its advent, as Georg Simmel remarked, the tendency was to interpret man's history either in individualistic or supernaturalistic terms. Sociology in France, England, Germany and the United States arose specifically from a sense of dissatisfaction with that framework which limited the interpretation of human experience to Great Men and Gods. Feeling this inadequacy, a number of philosophers, psychologists, historians, economists and biologists deserted their respective fields with a view to

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forming another science, one that would fix upon hitherto neglected areas. It was assumed that a fuller understanding of man could be achieved if one analyzed what came to be called the social heritage or the superorganic.

Social science set as its objective the consideration of collective forces, institutional pressures, traditional ways of defining right and wrong. We had, in short, the beginnings of a separate discipline that would address itself to the study of norms or values which, though antedating our individual selves, help shape and powerfully constrain us to behave as we do. The systematic exploration of *group* factors had never before been undertaken. It was launched now under the Comtian motto which could serve for any science: *Savoir pour prévoir et prévoir pour pourvoir.* A unit of study previously slighted could thenceforth be singled out for special emphasis. Without denying individual differences and variable endowment, social science illuminated the study of man as a creature deeply influenced in habit, style of life, and world view by cultural coercion and imitation.

Ongoing human society exacts a high degree of conformity from its members, who, if they depart too drastically from given norms, face ostracism, excommunication, corporal punishment or death. This was the central idea of social science at its inception, and sight has never been lost of it since then. What united men like Comte, Spencer, Simmel, Sumner and Ward and what actuated them to work as they did was their common grasp of the fact that human nature is fashioned to a large extent by surrounding cultural configurations. This insight, often shared by those who despise its origins, is still the bond among all social scientists. However, the founders of sociology and kindred fields were, in our twentieth-century eyes, too speculative, too impressionistic and metaphysical, too dependent upon samples of one. From the standpoint of contemporary social science, a sample of one is hardly more valuable than a sample of none.

Sociology is an organized attempt to determine how far general statements about human conduct are valid. Can they be universalized? Are there exceptions? It has been asserted that men are in-

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herently pugnacious. Shall we explore the psyche of one man to see if this is so? Or had we better make a statistical cross-cultural survey, turning our attention especially to certain circumpolar and tropical regions where men do not and never have fought wars? Is it sensible or merely utopian to foster the "classless" society? Are age and sex status, which presuppose superordination and subordination, structural requirements of every social order? Such a question cannot be answered by ideologists, for preference is beside the point. Either stratification is never present, usually present, or always present. Scientific procedure calls for a definition of terms, clarification of the issue, formulation of hypotheses, and actual investigation of concrete societies. And so it is with any social problem that presses upon us. Population trends, suicide rates, lynchings, acculturation, international tension, marital discord, delinquency and mental disorder—the process of change itself—are specific areas on which social science has thrown a flood of light. The method is substantially statistical, but it does not purport to be exhaustive or exclusive. An investigator may have a fine sense of multidimensionality and yet stake out one level of abstraction for intensive research. Social science does not object to studying man from all angles, but protests the disregard of a particular angle from which much can be seen.

Says Skinner, "Unless something is true of the individual, it tends not to be very important from my point of view." Taken at face value, this means either that something supra-individual is unimportant or that Skinner's point of view is rather limited. If the former, then many intelligible activities are rendered incomprehensible; if the latter, then we may be permitted to go beyond Skinner.

To illustrate: a great deal is now known about the behavior of active crowds. When engaged in a race riot, crowds will form after some climactic event; they will wildly circulate rumors; their members will interstimulate one another; critical self-consciousness will go into eclipse; and normally unheard-of acts of brutality directed at another ethnic group, or symbols of it, will follow. In this situation a fully predictable progression of events occurs. A

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Public Affairs Pamphlet is appropriately entitled *Race Riots Are Unnecessary*. On the basis of theory and data accumulating for fifty years, it is possible to say today that, at best, race riots are preventable, and at the least, that they are controllable and hence unnecessary. *Savoir pour prévoir et prévoir pour pourvoir.*

The phenomenon of crowd behavior is well understood—all else follows from that—and its essence may be conveyed in one word: de-individualization. Crowds produce anonymity, selflessness, the submergence of individual identity, else they would not be crowds. This is evidenced by the frequent expressions of horror and dismay voiced by rioters after they have been detached from the collective hypnosis and re-individualized. The transformation of individuals into a crowd which then becomes something other and more than the sum of its parts is but a dramatic instance of the elementary axiom that what holds for an individual may not be descriptive of the group, and vice versa. In that branch of social science technically termed "collective behavior," one finds fashions, crazes, mobs, publics, fads, manias, revolutions and reforms. These constitute no inconsiderable part of human conduct, although in each case individual exertion is totally subordinate to group pressure.

The following exchange epitomizes how Krutch and Kroeber feel:

KROEBER: In general I should say a humanist, if I may speak for your group [Kroeber momentarily forgets that he has joined it], deals with values. Values are his subject matter, but I think that he is essentially interested in discerning, describing and understanding values, rather than in making value judgments for other people or prescribing for other people what they are going to do.

KRUTCH: I would accept that. I do not think that literature has established a set of values. I think the claim of literature is based simply on the fact that it is that realm of discourse in which the question of values is kept continuously to the fore. . . . It is that form of discourse in which the pre-eminence of values is recognized. It is not so much a question of defending or enforcing any set of values. It is merely the instance that the values which you have—happen to have—are the things which have the greatest influence on the kind of life you lead, the kind of experience you have, perhaps the kind of effect you produce.

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And Kroeber again:

> . . . what I object to most in this procedure of the social scientists to regiment or to tell us the proper course is the fact that they presume to tell us without being really interested in values. They have never made a study of them. . . . And the humanist is interested, I don't say in how the values happen, but in what the values are like, while the social scientist is primarily interested, I would say, in where we are going from here, what are you doing about it, what is the program, what is the work.

One reads the above with incredulity. These men have soberly stated that humanism abjures values, does not advance them, but is only concerned with their influence and effect, their nature rather than their validity. Contrariwise, it would seem social science is chiefly concerned with the promulgation of values. We will forget for the moment that, in another passage, Krutch taxes science for being unable and disinclined to give us moral directives. There is no red thread through this maze, and though the many strands lead nowhere, it is possible to examine some of them separately.

The renunciation of values implies a redefinition of humanism, which in the past always stood for something, whether it was Individualism, Theism or Instrumentalism. The current outlook might be called the degradation of the humanist dogma. It now stands for nothing, stands outside everything with Olympian detachment. The social scientist, however, is *engagé*; he tells people how to live. His is the new ethic. Is something wrong with this picture? Not much, beyond the fact that, despite the alleged principles of perceptual constancy, it mistakes white for black.

A basic textbook in sociology would reveal, as it does every year to several thousand freshmen, that values constitute the subject matter of social science. The book will explain, even to a cursory reader, that children internalize values, that this is how they are socialized and humanized, that from infancy onward the largest part of their behavior will be "normatively" determined. Chapters are headed "Folkways," "Mores," "Institutions," "Codes." The student is exhorted to observe all such phenomena to see how they condition, stylize, pattern and differentiate mankind. To study values, not to prescribe them, is the heart of social science.

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With great, if unwitting, dexterity, Krutch and Kroeber have performed an interdisciplinary transplantation of the heart. If they are right, Max Weber, who all his adult life took himself to be a social scientist, was really a humanist when he set out to study the impact of religious values while remaining "religiously amusical." The writer has a little girl aged sixteen months, who for some weeks has said, "Down!" most imperiously every time she wished to be picked up. Father and daughter understand each other and behave suitably in response to these verbal cues. Words may be given any acceptation so long as they are understood. But it is too much if Krutch and Kroeber define humanism to mean social science and then use it as a stick wherewith to beat social scientists.

With this treatment social science soon becomes a bloody pulp, its *disjecta membra* scattered across the forum table. Says Krutch:

> My point is simply that I believe that the experience of living is the thing which for me has the greatest value, and that all the social sciences which tend to manipulate and regularize and unify human conduct result in a general lowering of the intensity of the experience of living, and that, from my standpoint, they are bad.

At another point Brinton makes this comment:

> We have had two wars against totalitarianisms and we have won them both.

Krutch replies:

> And again both cultures against which we have waged war have been cultures which had developed further than we have the arts of applying experimental knowledge about human reactions.

What does all this mean? Have we gone full circle? Can this social science which is a myth and a fake and so feeble that its practitioners are unable to approximate a La Rochefoucauldian epigram, can this puny bastard of a so-called science be in any wise responsible for manipulating, regularizing and unifying human conduct? Since in the new humanist universe of discourse everything else has been turned topsy-turvy, the judgment of omnicompetence no doubt follows from the judgment of incompetence. This is Either/Or with a Kierkegaardian vengeance: either the

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science is omnicompetent and damnable or it is incompetent—and damnable. Or neither, or both—and the same.

In truth, many social scientists have noted a modern trend toward manipulation, uniformity and disenchantment. But, is it credible to assume that they are to blame for all these developments? One could as reasonably assert that *The Modern Temper,* a handbook of disillusionment, a consummate credo for young men suffering from *Weltschmerz,* written in 1929 by Joseph Wood Krutch, caused America to lose faith in its morals. But this would be unfair; in fact it would be a tactic very familiar to Krutch and excoriated by him. The younger Krutch had no more liking for science than he now has. His preference was for literature. He scorned as philistinism, and probably still would, the notion that a Hemingway, a Dos Passos or an O'Neill is responsible for the immorality, cynicism and despair which he describes in his creative writings. Transfer similar phenomena from the imaginative to the scientific realm, let the same imputation be made, and the accuser's voice is still that of a Yahoo. This version of the pathetic or literary fallacy passes muster no more easily if applied to Weber, who has a small audience, than if applied to Hemingway, who is read by millions.

If all this is staggering, then the final blow is administered by Krutch when he claims that totalitarian cultures which we have subdued are characterized by their vast development in applying "experimental knowledge to human reactions." The subject ostensibly in hand is social science, not medical science. Perhaps Krutch means Nazi physicians who performed outrageous "experiments" but made no significant discoveries. He cannot mean Nazi sociologists—the term is a contradiction in itself. So our bewilderment deepens. It must be said very plainly that totalitarianism results in the extinction of social science, which is based on free inquiry and therefore intolerable to dictators. Why fear, loathe or shut off this avenue of investigation? It is one to which the admitted brilliance of Dostoevski or Thoreau and the accumulated wisdom of humanism will never lead.

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Dreiser and the Dark Texture of Life

MAXWELL GEISMAR

THE PERSONAL HISTORY of Theodore Dreiser was to a large degree the history of his work, as is likely to be true of any major artist. In Dreiser's case it was virtually a history of suppression and censorship.

Sister Carrie, one of the landmarks of realism along with *The Red Badge of Courage* and *McTeague,* was recommended to the publishing house of Doubleday-Page by Frank Norris himself, then banned by them after publication. Few copies of that edition of the book were ever sold. Surely this contributed to the collapse of Dreiser's health at this period; he gave up his literary ambitions for ten years and turned to editorial work. His second novel, *Jennie Gerhardt,* was published in 1911, and it was only then that *Sister Carrie* too was accepted on its merits.

A decade of silence on the part of such a writer was an eloquent testimonial to the moral taboos which dominated and constricted our literary taste at the turn of the century. These were the years of brooding and silence on Dreiser's part, of endurance and germination in which to a curious extent his career paralleled that of his epoch, and the publication of *Jennie* coincided with the opening of the strictly modern period—or of "contemporary literature" —in our letters. Still, Dreiser's fourth novel, *The Titan,* was again blocked from circulation by the publishers who had originally undertaken to publish it. One year later, in 1915, *The "Genius"* was banned and became the center of a famous literary controversy; in 1925, at the height of the literary renascence in the United States,

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An American Tragedy was banned in Boston. Furthermore, in the years directly following this work, and at the peak of his own popular fame and success, when a less restless spirit might, after a lifetime of experiment and revolt, have settled down to more tranquil behavior, Dreiser took occasion to denounce and repudiate the entire structure of American society.

This record, admirable to the point of being suicidal, was characteristic of a temperament that responded instinctively against every attempt at repression or censorship by a still bolder or more ruthless innovation in the field of his art. For there is really no question that Dreiser was the most distinguished member in the whole group of modern American novelists. One test of a writer's value is in the series of illusions and superstitions that surround his work, and, perhaps more than most, Dreiser's novels have been obscured by a fog of errors and misconceptions. In the essay that established the position of the Hoosier Master, H. L. Mencken also declared he was "elephantine, doltish, coarse, dismal, flatulent." Allowing for the element of exaggeration, these are practically the same terms that are used to describe Dreiser today by modern critics, while some of his own literary disciples have tended to reduce him to a solemn pioneer of naturalism. How much truth is there in this view? The young hero of the autobiographical volumes was at any rate a very different character. "Chronically nebulous, doubting, uncertain, I stared and stared at everything, only wondering, not solving." And the tone of these volumes in which Dreiser discussed his own life and his time, far more eloquently than any other historian of his career, was warm, tolerant, equable—indeed, not without humor or charm.

The sources of his temperament and many sections of his work are clear in the pages of *A History of Myself*. One of his sisters who eloped to New York with a married man had a share in the drama of Sister Carrie; another, who returned home pregnant and was secretly taken care of by the mother, was used in Jennie Gerhardt's career; while the Asa Conklins, a remarkable couple in the autobiography, were the model for the Asa Griffiths in *An American Tragedy*. During the year Dreiser spent at Indiana State

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University, he was indifferent, for the most part, to the formal education offered him, but read Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, Lecky. "I was never weary of physiology, botany, astronomy, zoology." These were the origins of his own relative and pragmatic thought. The whole nexus of nineteenth-century evolutionary beliefs (that, adapted to native circumstances, became the basis for our philosophy and art during the 1900's) was celebrated in a spirit of inquiry rather than a codification of rules. In Dreiser's work we may also notice the counterpoint of change and stability in the dynamics of the life movement itself—"the tendency to variation in every direction, the counter tendency to and necessity for equation"—although it seemed that the necessity for stability in things was less important to him sometimes than the poetry of change, when the elements of nature herself, "the rains, the winds, the frosts, the tides, the moods, angers and delights of men" were eating at all visible and invisible things.

Indeed, it was change—as the mature artist declared—not knowledge, that we sought (or at least that we found) while "we stand as ever in the past on the shore of the unknowable." Meanwhile he had wandered to Chicago after his mother's death and a childhood spent in the indolent, rich, green countryside of southern Indiana. (The father was of German descent; the mother, vague, gentle, deceptive, was of Slavic peasant stock; and Dreiser mixed these strains in his nature.) There he became a dishwasher in a Greek restaurant, a checker in the freight yards, a hardware clerk, a laundry-truck driver, a real estate agent, while he began to learn about the slums, the vices, the secret workings of the great city. "Was there no end to the subtlety and depravity of people?" As a salesman for a furniture company, he himself withheld twenty-five dollars from his weekly accounts, and was discharged for theft. "This lapse on my part I lay to my opportunistic and pagan disposition. . . . With this, as I have always thought, ended my true youth." Like his work, his life had undertones of the fable and the myth, and the allegorical note of the Fall sounded in his novels from Hurstwood's robbery of the open safe to the crime of Clyde Griffiths.

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The Dreisers had the habit of living in questionable neighborhoods—the habit of poverty, that is—and from his earliest acquaintance with the Indiana towns of the 1880's and their ignorant, violent, dubious western-country types, the son was often convinced that life was built upon murder and lust, and nothing else. "Sweet, tender, flawless universe, indeed!" Perhaps nobody else in our literature has had such a direct and intimate feeling for the commonest forms of experience or the raw texture of life as it is lived by ordinary people who never rise above it. "Men are born by the millions. They die in great masses silently." Dreiser can illuminate the vital center in the most obscure or mediocre lives, and his work is filled with minor personages who are lifted into the light of the narrative for a brief moment and then allowed to drop back into the darkness and obscurity of existence itself.

Yet the contrast between his first and second periods of writing also illustrated the polar contrasts in his view of experience, and a series of "extended opposites," as it were, gave to his work a sort of marvelous ambiguity. The novelist of the lower depths and pure feeling was quite capable of uncompromising insight into the highest levels of American wealth, and of a diabolical view of American society at large through which Darwinism itself was elevated to the state of a universal Machiavellianism. What a brilliant hardness existed in this "trilogy of desire," and what terrible forms of desire!—perhaps the acquisitive instinct of nature itself on the deepest levels of interpretation. *The Financier* and *The Titan* are at any rate the great works of Dreiser's maturity. Our view of the financial community and of the political scene can never be the same after reading these novels; they have left on us an imprint of natural suspicion and unwilling admiration in which nothing is improbable and everything is possible.

But it was precisely the hard sense of a reality larger than that of pain or suffering, or even of material success and power, that was the essential basis of the tragic view in Dreiser's work, and that prevented his compassion from becoming sentiment. If his work cut through the moral hypocrisy of his time, he had all too firm a grasp of natural law. And if the first value of his novels was to open

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up whole new areas of experience for modern American writing, their final value was simply the permanent expression of this material. They were not merely propaganda for realism, as we have been told so often: they were realism itself in the grand tradition which includes both sides and all facets of life, as well as the merely sordid, ugly or unpleasant things, or those which were once considered shocking or taboo. Although Dreiser's prime historical role was as a critic of social institutions and conventions, his primary literary intention, constantly involved as he was with battles against social prejudice, was surely not to judge life but to reveal it.

As we shall see, the artist himself was not so much involved with a cultural as what one might call a biological radicalism. In the young Dreiser, as in the older one, there is no doubt that the goddess of desire still reigned in the crude frontier versions of a luxurious and immemorial past. "Embowered in the festal depths of spring, set above her altars of porphyry, chalcedony, ivory and gold, see her smile the smile that is at once the texture and the essence of delight. . . . In the forests of Pan still ring the cries of the worshippers of Aphrodite!" The arts, sciences, trades—so he believed—were the servants merely of the primal impulse, or the underpinning "of the great world altar on which the creative love or sex impulse made its bed." They were not merely a sublimation of the sexual instinct; they were the tributes to it. In this period of his work Dreiser emerged as the writer who concerned himself above all with the instinctual bases of life, and who accepted most unequivocally the human impulses and affections in all their power and uncertainty, just as, against the background of his own time and of the younger generation that followed him, he remained the novelist who understood most completely the implications of his theme.

His value here was that he reaffirmed all our deepest and hidden convictions about the pleasures of life, the true purposes of existence which we often try to forget simply because they are so difficult to fulfill. The critique of social institutions was secondary to this concern, while the figures of raw human vitality whom he most admired were themselves independent of social class. As in the

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short stories of Dreiser, they might be an ignorant and prejudiced Irish workman; a wily Russian newspaper reporter; a New York racketeer of obscure origins who was nevertheless full of cunning, magnetism, illusion. In Dreiser's view, character was never wholly respectable anyhow: it was mixed with the subterfuges of nature; it was desire in a savage form, low, deceitful, untutored. The best instances of it were often, in fact, a mixture of natural grandeur and native ignorance; and Dreiser found these figures of primitive passions or mystic impulses not as the next generation of novelists would so often describe them in foreign types or exotic lands, but everywhere around him in the native scene. As a newspaper reporter himself in Pittsburgh, he had met and was fascinated by the steel barons and banking tycoons.

While in the Carnegie Library he read and whiled his time away until he came across Balzac. It was a catalytic point in his thought. He had already surrendered the "lingering filaments of Catholicism" to a philosophy that was biological, evolutionary and relativistic; he had subordinated even the social processes of his country —"the heartless and savage aspect of its internal economy"—to the laws and customs of nature. He was looking for a way to express the passions and appetites he had felt in American society, and the French novelist gave him the clue: "Through him I saw a prospect so wide that it left me breathless." And it was this point of view (more experiential and mature than Crane's or Norris', far more rich and complex than London's, bolder than Glasgow's) that cut through the established literary code of the 1900's: the happy, roseate description of life, the lack of any reference to "the coarse and the vulgar and the cruel and the terrible" which Dreiser had noticed in the standard authors of the day. "They seemed to deal with phases of sweetness and beauty and success and goodness such as I rarely encountered . . ." he said. "Perhaps, as I now thought, life as I saw it, the darker phases, was never to be written about." This was at the start of his own literary career, to be sure—the dark texture of life as he had himself felt it.

Nevertheless, coming at the close of a national period as he did, and representing a native version of that western European flower-

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ing of art and culture which threw up so many artists, painters, dramatists and novelists in England, France or Russia during this period—a transitional figure like them of range and magnitude—he summarized the highest virtues of the past, the grand style of an epoch.

Possibly the high figures in the arts occur at such periods of history—at the close of a tradition which they seem to embody and convey almost by instinct, at the dawn of a new epoch which they sense. The mixture of the old and the new was another representative aspect of Dreiser's work, at any rate; and this ruthless modernist, who embodied in some ways the widest reaches of the nineteenth-century conscience, might also be described as the last Victorian.

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..... Under Whatever Sky .....

IRWIN EDMAN

Themes Without Words

New York has been resplendent this winter with visiting companies of theatrical artists speaking languages variously alien to our own. One was French and one was Greek. The critics and assorted amateur theatergoers conceded in print, or more often in private, that they knew little French and less Greek. Such vulgarly necessary equipment apparently was not necessary to the comprehension of drama conveyed by voice, by expressiveness of gesture and by loveliness of face. A De Marivaux plot does not yield itself to easy comprehension by movements of the body, though Gilbert Murray and a dozen others have made the story of Oedipus familiar even to those without Greek, ancient or modern.

Once long ago when Bergson was on a visit to this country, I met a dowager consumed with enthusiasm about a marvelously beautiful lecture of his she had heard. "Do you understand French?" I could not help asking, for her culture was more appreciative than informed or exact. "No," she replied, "but it was thrilling just the same." And doubtless it was. Years later I found *The Cherry Orchard* moving and beautiful as presented by the Moscow Art Company, though it helped a little to have read the play in translation. There is a sense, of course, in which the theater approaches pure pantomime or ballet or music, and there is drama in the expression of a face, in the sound of voices, in the articulation of syllables. I found Italian beautiful to listen to long before I knew what it meant. I have heard lecturers whom it would have been interesting to watch even if one were deaf: Bertrand Russell, Whitehead, Dewey, and Bergson, whom my dowager friend so adored. There is a kind of abstract art of personal plasticity, of visible expression, and a viable geometry of gesture that are an abstract essence of theater. And part of the art of the theater is present in teaching and lecturing, too. I doubt not that a deaf student without the gift of lip reading would have got something out of *watching* John Dewey think, or seeing Croce gesticulate or shrug his shoulders. There are themes without words and discourse without sentences. It has been instructive to go to the theater and find that in a foreign language it is the playing that's the thing.

Toes Are to Dance On

"A first book of first definitions" is the subtitle of an enchanting book by Ruth Krauss. The author suggested, or had suggested to her by children, definitions of things they had often encountered already in their very young lives. *A Hole Is to Dig* is filled with such definitions as "Steps are to sit on," "Hands are to hold," "Ears are to wiggle," and "A party is to say how-do-you-do and shake hands." But delightful as is this little classic for the little ones, it has special interest for anyone who has ever read Aristotle or any other philosopher or who has reflected on the origin of philosophical thinking in the race and in the individual.

Doubtless none of the children who hazarded these definitions, all functional, had any notion of a theory called "functionalism," a philosophy called "pragmatism," a point of view labeled "instrumentalism." But these children were functionalists, instrumentalists, pragmatists, every last one of them. And these definitions suggest, one likes to believe, that the pragmatist and the poet in human nature, poetry, and use in human experience are not so far apart as some conventional classifiers would have them.

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Many things have many uses, and "Toes are to dance on" is a definition that emphasizes celebration at the same time that it identifies utility. "Hands are to make things," "Snow is to roll in," "A hole is for a mouse to live in." No, children who hazarded these definitions were not pragmatists after all. They were teleologists, theological poets. They were like those lovable and simple saints who see the world as a wonderful set of arrangements exclusively adapted to the genial intentions of God. Everything they see is serving a use, and every use is a marvel and a joy.

Inflation All Over the Place

It is well known that economic tendencies have repercussions in other fields. Any Marxist, any historian of any persuasion will tell you as much. The rise and fall of a culture are functions of the rise and fall of a commercial empire: the death of an industry may bring with it the decline of a literature, and explorations of new continents had a lot to do, as any high-school boy knows, with the glorious outburst of Elizabethan literature.

One ought, therefore, not to be surprised that inflation should appear in other spheres than that of the price of beefsteak or of baby sitters. There has been enormous inflation in the use of words recently. Radio announcers cannot simply bid you good evening. They must wish you a *good*, good evening. People who agree with you no longer say, "You are right." They feel that to be taken seriously they must say, "You are *so* right."

In more responsible users of the language one sees the same phenomenon. Just a quarter-century ago Spengler was writing about *The Decline of the West*. Some new generalizer will be along any moment now with a two-volume work on the end not of the West simply, but of the East and West. Human nature was seldom, except by extreme sentimentalists, held to be completely angelic, and even optimistic liberals of a few decades ago thought that the human personality left something to be desired. But we are assured now by some very earnest thinkers that we will never get anywhere socially unless we recognize the fact that we are by nature absolute rotters, and *that* goes for us all, you and me and the most dedicated saint, the most seraphic infant. Democracy is not simply tottering—it has collapsed; science is not faltering—it is bankrupt. We are threatened not with shortages, but with famine. Morality is not at a low ebb—it has vanished. The world, in short, does not have a headache—it has a *terrible* headache.

How agreeable it is when one arrives in England to discover that at least the *verbal* currency there is sound. "Not too bad" is high praise, and "good show" is an intimation of ecstasy. Perhaps things are not so bad as we've whooped them up to be in this country. Even when we go in for pessimism, we do it in a big way. It may not after all be the end of the world, or even of civilization; it may be only a moment, not too pleasant, of transition. But it always is such a moment. Things are not too good, are they? Hopeless? Come now, you are *so* wrong.

Not Quite Spot News

I have for some months now been receiving the *Manchester Guardian*, which for a year in Europe I read daily, and to which I became addicted for its liberal good sense (sometimes a little sententious), its humanity and tolerance, its humor and its sinewy English prose. By the time I get it in New York, the news is a little late, and there is nothing that seems quite as dated as week-old intelligence that one already knows. A half-century ago seems much fresher; it at least has the freshness of one's remembered childhood about it. But belated news seen from a different perspective is interesting; what America or Russia or France looks like to English eyes is worth knowing, even tardily.

However, the part of the paper I turn to is not the news, but those articles, essays, sketches that remain news any day, any hour, any season, that would be interesting a year from now or a year ago. There are

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. . . . . The Revolving Bookstand . . . . . .

Love Letters to a Universe

WILLKIE. By Joseph Barnes. *New York: Simon and Schuster. 1952. 405 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by SAMUEL GRAFTON

This is a fat five dollars' worth of rue for those who remember when Wendell Willkie flew around One World, the headlamps of his plane lighting up a vision of a peaceful planet firmly based on international amity, civil liberties, independence of peoples and limitless economic expansion. If our world presents a face to the universe, as the moon does, it probably wore a twisted smile as Willkie's plane crept across it; for the Soviet half of the planet had no intention at any time of allowing civil liberties or independence of peoples wherever its power could reach, and Willkie's own party was happily engaged in cutting the ground from under him while he was conveniently high up in the air. This is a book to make you laugh and make you cry, and the laughter will hurt more than the tears. Willkie was an "adolescent," Madame Chiang Kai-shek reportedly said about him at one time; but if he was adolescent, we were all young. To read these pages is to feel as if one were rereading the first poems and love letters of one's youth, love letters to a universe which has, in a remarkable way, lost its looks in ten years.

This is not the final (or, as the book-owls say, definitive) life of Willkie. The final book on Willkie will have to be written by a novelist, and Joseph Barnes isn't that. He is at his best on the later phases of Willkie's career, on that last "long summer" of 1944, when Willkie lay dying in Lenox Hill Hospital. Treating both Roosevelt and Dewey, who were running against each other for the Presidency, with even-handed disdain, he hoped, by withholding his support from either until the last possible moment, to force both into deeper and more explicit commitments toward international co-operation. He died in a newspaper-cluttered hospital room with the word unspoken, though both sides claimed him later. Here Barnes, as a good reporter, tells a simple, striking story in a free, effective form which could easily be dramatized as the last act of a tragedy of our times. (The play would, of course, in the temper of today, probably be a miserable flop.)

Barnes's touch is less secure on the earlier portions of Willkie's career. Large sections of his book here read like an extended editorial article, full of matter about the Industrial Revolution and other "forces" which, sweeping across the plains of Indiana and altering its peaceful rural life, went into the "making" of Willkie. Forces, my eye. Willkie was an original. If forces shaped him, they were rather selective, because they shaped so few like him. Willkie's importance is precisely that he thrust himself as a human question mark across the forces of his day, in Russia no less than here. Barnes tries to find a blueprint for continuity in Willkie's life, tracing some of his early interest in civil liberties to the participation of his near ancestors in the German revolutionary ferment of the last century. He also ascribes a large part of Willkie's fervor in fighting TVA, while head of Commonwealth & Southern, to a real fear of "big government" growing so great as to dominate peoples' lives. It could be, but my own view of Willkie's course is somewhat simpler. It seems to me that,

SAMUEL GRAFTON, newspaper columnist and contributor to magazines, is the author of *All Out, How Democracy Will Defend America* and *An American Diary.*

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as many sons do, he broke away from the pattern set by his parents, who were early Indiana liberals and even labor lawyers (his mother was the first woman lawyer in the state), and set about to become successful and rich. (Some of his old Akron associates, talking to me about Willkie's start, were still, decades later, somewhat stunned by the force of the young man's ambition as he revealed it and in fact openly talked about it.) Having achieved a great commercial success and satisfied his early drives, he went back, it appears to me, in his forties to the image of his parents—as many sons also do. We do not really need continuity to understand anybody's life in this age of the quantum theory, which allows for discontinuities and sudden breaks even in the physical world.

But Barnes excellently understands Willkie's most engaging quality, the manner in which luminous perceptions took hold of him and shot through him and transformed him, and he understands also the kind of "don't care" guy Willkie was, which made him treat his perceptions as truth and follow them wherever they led. I remember a hot afternoon in Willkie's living room in Rushville, Indiana, in the summer of 1943, when he announced to me that if he ran for the Presidency the next year and were elected he would put a Negro in his cabinet—and not in a job having anything to do with race relations. Negroes, he said, would have attained political equality only when one of them could be a Cabinet member, like anybody else—just as labor, he remarked, would have achieved its full growth in American life only when a union leader could be, say, Secretary of War as readily as Secretary of Labor. He meant it; he instructed me to remember it, and to call him a liar if he didn't do it. Read the book for the story of that man. It is a book which gains in pace and clarity as it gets away from a somewhat heavy beginning, and is at its best as it approaches the end in the sickroom in which lay the man whom both parties were afraid to call their own, and yet for whose approval both hungered.

A Generous Definition

A HISTORY OF SCIENCE: Ancient Science Through the Golden Age of Greece. By George Sarton. *Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1952. 646 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH KATZ

A History of Science is the first of a projected eight-volume work by George Sarton, one of the world's leading authorities on the subject. The present volume carries the story from Egyptian and Asiatic beginnings through the golden age of Greece until roughly the year 300 B.C. As told by another man this could easily have been a story of tedious "firsts": a long-since-outdated crude instrument, a dawning mathematical theorem, a banal cosmological generalization. But as told by Mr. Sarton the history ceases to be past, and we look with present wonder and excitement at the stars above, trying to establish the law of their wanderings; bend with the medical scientist over the patient to search for symptom and cause; seek with the physicist to submit the variety of natural change to some manageable basic categories.

The author defines science generously. He ranges far beyond the physical sciences into anthropology, history, even epic and tragic poetry. So his history rather is cultural history, but with more emphasis on the sciences than one usually finds in cultural histories. This breadth of scope is deliberate, for he finds no principle by which to elevate one branch of knowledge over another. They all spring from the two fundamental human needs to control and to understand. This also leads him into a full exploration of the social background of science.

There is a puritanical conception of science as matter-of-fact, pedestrian, pedantic. Actually science is a function of the questions that are asked, and the theories that have historically emerged from these questions constitute science an enterprise

✪ Assistant professor of philosophy at Vassar College, JOSEPH KATZ is the author of several books in his field. A recent article, "Faith, Reason and Art," appeared in the Spring, 1952, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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of the human imagination worthy to take its place by the side of the arts. As George Santayana has remarked, the Greeks who raised science to eminence were at the same time characterized by the fertility of their myth-making imagination. This book is pleasant reading because of the happy mixture of such a conception of the imaginative nature of science with a gift for lucidity and unencumbered interpretation. The reader is reminded of Bertrand Russell's facility, for instance in his *History of Western Philosophy*, to render highly abstract matters with humor and grace. The difference is that while Mr. Russell has a tendency to satirize as nonsense what to many has made good sense, Mr. Sarton more sympathetically often uncovers the hidden sense in an unappreciated theory. One consequence of Sarton's sympathetic manner of inquiry is that Egyptian and Mesopotamian science emerge as more than the meager and narrowly pragmatic antecedents of Greek theory they are frequently presented to be.

The one major disappointment in the book, to this reviewer, is the author's treatment of Plato. Here his desire to be independent of scholarly clichés is less in evidence, and he makes Plato out to be totalitarian in politics and fancifully superstitious in natural science. But this orthodox interpretation of Plato forgets that Plato does not necessarily hold the theories which he discusses and that, while Plato often initiates a discussion with a rather crude theory (though usually one that was popular in his day), he manages, for those who are wise to his method, to transfigure the problem to more subtle dimensions. Sarton accepts the hoary distinction between a fanciful Plato and a scientific Aristotle. On the basis of this distinction, however, he goes on to a sympathetic account of the all-embracing scientific genius of Aristotle.

The present work, in contrast to Mr. Sarton's *Introduction to the History of Science*, is addressed to the general reader. There is much the reader will learn, and his sense for the curious byways of scientific development will be quickened by such instances as the failure of the Hippocratic physician, for all his diagnostic astuteness, to consider, most obvious of all, the beat of the human pulse in the investigation of disease. The author's history has grown out of his many years of teaching at Harvard. It reveals something, in its genial asides, of the personality of the lecturer who may stop the main line of his argument to talk about the first edition of a favorite author or to draw an incidental parallel between Herodotus and Mozart. Behind it all peers an intelligence chastened by its study of history, knowing that it is erroneous to speak of Greek rationality or Christian saintliness if one means by that anything more than a partial and transitory triumph of the human spirit.

A Study in Evil

THE DEVILS OF LOUDON. By Aldous Huxley. *New York: Harper & Brothers. 1952. 340 pp. $4.00.*

Reviewed by LOUIS SIMPSON

In the year 1634, Urbain Grandier, vicar of Loudon in France, was tried on charges of witchcraft. Several nuns of the Ursuline order had been possessed by devils, and they accused Grandier of being instrumental. Though many people, both laymen and clergy, suspected a hoax, the vicar was found guilty, tortured, and burned at the stake. The nuns continued to be possessed, and one of the exorcists, the Jesuit mystic Jean-Joseph Surin, himself exhibited the symptoms of evil possession.

These are the episodes out of which, in *The Devils of Loudon*, Aldous Huxley has wrought a study of mass hysteria, a commentary on the abuse of faith by political power, and an examination into the nature of mystical experience. Only Mr. Huxley, pointing his narrative with encyclopedic information, could have written

✪ LOUIS SIMPSON is an assistant editor at the Bobbs-Merrill Company. His poems and fiction have appeared in the *Columbia Review*, *Harper's*, *Esquire*, *Tomorrow*, the *Chicago Review* and THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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this book, and there are simple, declarative utterances in this writing which an earlier Huxley could not have made—this, for example: "By thinking primarily of evil we tend, however excellent our intentions, to create occasions for evil to manifest itself." In reading *The Devils of Loudon* one cannot but recognize the passage and progress of a major intelligence.

The reader is well into it before he realizes that this is more than a rattling good story. The beginning is almost entirely about Urbain Grandier, and Balzac could not have invented a more suggestive name for this ambitious lay priest, a clever—too clever—pupil of the Jesuits. Coming into his vicarage early, Grandier had before him the certainty of a career, perhaps even a bishopric. But he had two vices: a proud tongue and a lecherous disposition. He used his pulpit eloquence to offend the Jesuits' enemies; he used his wit to make fools of men in drawing rooms; he used both eloquence and good looks to seduce women. He was a more than average sensual man; in our time he might be called "well rounded." But priests were not supposed to be well rounded.

Not content with easy conquests, Grandier undertook to seduce the young daughter a good friend had entrusted to him for religious instruction. The scenes of this experiment recall the bed in *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* situated beneath the image of the Virgin. But Grandier pushed his luck too far when, for a whim, he deliberately insulted a churchman who was temporarily out of favor at court. This churchman was destined to be the Duc de Richelieu, one of the most formidable enemies of all time. When Grandier's enemies in Loudon hit upon the idea of making use of certain girlish pranks in a nearby Ursuline nunnery in order to accuse Grandier of sorcery, they had a willing ally at Paris in the great duke. The vicar, whose character improved with misfortune, refused to fly from his accusers, for, in both vice and virtue, he was a man of reason. Faced with his judges—yawning monsters out of a Daumier gallery—he knew, too late, that reason was not enough.

The main accusers, the possessed nuns, whatever their original motives or hallucinations, had been driven quite insane by a number of exorcists encouraged by Grandier's enemies. Soeur Jeanne, their prioress in Mr. Huxley's reconstruction, began with having sexual fantasies about Grandier. Circumstances being what they were, she contented herself with making up stories in which his *doppelgänger* made passes at her. Soon other sisters were having nightly visions of the devilishly handsome priest. The exorcists arrived and took over the show. Crowds came from miles around to enjoy the nuns' foul language and obscene gestures and to see Soeur Jeanne do the splits. Certain doctors declared that the women were suffering only from *furor uterinus*; they were ignored. Some observers remarked that the women could not speak in other languages as devils could, and that their Latin was abominable. Well, said the exorcists, these devils hadn't traveled. And, as Soeur Jeanne put it, "Deus non volo." The deposition of devils was taken as gospel truth, against orthodox ecclesiastical law, which held that such deposition was worthless.

The blatant travesty of justice which was Grandier's trial can be understood only in the political context of the period. The evidence was not important; the point was that Grandier must burn, after a good show. Richelieu wanted to strike terror into Loudon, a Huguenot stronghold which had never quite capitulated. Also, if he could declare a state of emergency and institute a special bureau of investigation of devils, he'd have a handy police force. His plan anticipated the creation of the Gestapo by three centuries. The duke achieved his immediate objective. Grandier, both feet smashed to a pulp by pressing, was burned. But he did not confess. The refinement of torture by which innocent men are made to confess crimes, that total liquidation of personality, was a technique unthought-of before our day. Indeed, Grandier the sensualist died something like a saint, and both educated and mob opinion veered in his favor. Richelieu had to forego his thought-police.

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Saint-Joseph Surin, arriving after Grandier's ashes were scattered, attached himself to Soeur Jeanne. That miserable woman did not want to have her devils (seven in all, located each in a different part of her dwarfish body) expelled. Surin cajoled, prayed with her, plunged himself into the hideous miasma of her erotic fantasies and catatonic delusions. Occupied with evil, the mystic himself became a prey to convulsions. The circus was getting out of hand. Even the sisters themselves began to regret their publicity. They knew that they had lent themselves willingly to the encroachments of devils, exorcists and crowds, but they were in too deep to go back. (Soeur Jeanne, in perhaps her only admirable moment, had confessed and tried to hang herself.) The demoniacs faded out of the picture, and the show moved on to Louviers, where fresh impostors were drawing crowds. Soeur Jeanne lived out her life as a walking relic and table-rapper; Surin, both lucid and insane, convinced that he was damned, convinced even that he was a sorcerer, finally emerged into the peace that passeth understanding.

After Grandier's martyrdom, Mr. Huxley's chief interest is in Surin and the kinds of mystical experience. Although I think objection may be taken to certain lengthy passages of explanatory writing, especially references to Oriental mystical experience which jar upon the scene that the historian-novelist has created, yet for the most part the author's conclusions seem available to the reader. Mr. Huxley has come a far way toward his fellow men, and it seemed for a time that we were going to lose him to a preoccupation as remote from earth as Surin's. What Mr. Huxley has to say about a splinter of crystal, sometimes called the soul, which joins us to Good and underlies the conscious mind as surely as do the bats and snakes of Evil illuminated by Freud, is most heartening. Surin found this fragment by breaking the threshold between self and non-self in a downward direction; at the same time, like drug-takers or the consumers of political propaganda, he went mad. Most men break out of the self—that terrible state of knowing that one exists—as a crab does, sideways and slightly upward, by joining themselves to creditable organizations. But there is a higher synthesis. However, I will leave these conjectures to those better equipped to accept or reject them.

The Facets of an Image

A MIRROR FOR AMERICANS: Life and Manners in the United States, 1790-1870, as Recorded by American Travelers. Vol. I: Life in the East; Vol. II: The Cotton Kingdom; Vol. III: The Frontier Moves West. Compiled and edited by Warren S. Tryon. Illustrated. *Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1952. 793 pp. Set, $14.50; individual volumes, $5.00.*

Reviewed by DeLancey Ferguson

What European travelers saw in America, and what they thought about it, was recorded in many pages of print and has been analyzed by modern editors and scholars in many more. But long before they were exhorted to see their own country first, Americans were doing precisely that, and were setting down their impressions with all the industry and verbiage of visitors from overseas.

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Quite rightly, Mr. Tryon has omitted selections from the travel classics like *Two Years Before the Mast, The Oregon Trail* and *Roughing It*, which are familiar to every reading American. He has also omitted guidebooks, official reports, "recollections" published many years after the event, and all manuscript material. In other words, he has limited himself to records set

✪ The principal books of DELANCEY FERGUSON, chairman of the department of English at Brooklyn College, are *Pride and Passion: Robert Burns; Mark Twain: Man and Legend;* and *Letters of Robert Burns.*

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For instance, John L. Peyton in 1848 took a stagecoach trip from Tiffin to Sandusky which in almost every detail was a duplicate of Dickens' journey in the same state six years earlier. When Davy Crockett and Anne Royall visited Massachusetts, they were shown the state prison, the Perkins Institute for the Blind, and the mills at Lowell. These, too, we have seen before, through other pages. In Philadelphia, the Fairmount Waterworks, in Washington, the spittoons in the White House evoked from native visitors the same responses that they received from foreigners. Nor were most of the natives any more successful than a *Punch*-drunk Englishman when it came to accurate reporting of colloquial and dialect speech. A few made believable little lists of localisms, but others seem to have done their listening with the ears of Dickens or Fenimore Cooper. Here is Charles Fenno Hoffman reporting a Kentucky innkeeper (or boniface) in 1834: "Where's Yankee and Dutchee? the bacon and greens are smoking on the table, and I must take a glass of cool liquor with them before we sit down. Ah! there's my stout rifle-cracker; come along, Dutchee, my boy. . . ." Compared with this, Elijah Pogram and Hannibal Chollop are phonographically transcribed.

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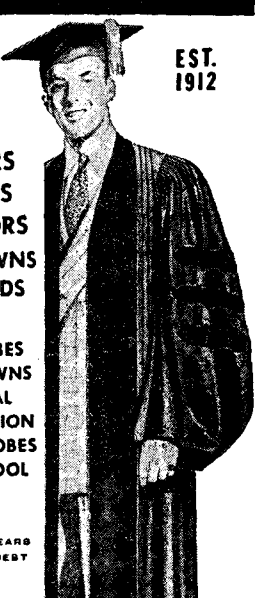

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F. L. McCLUER, Ph.D., *President*

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(Continued from page 241)

sake of a common effort; and it was only the divisions in Islam that enabled the intruders from the West to maintain themselves in an alien environment for so long as they did. When Moslem unity was achieved, the fate of the Franks was sealed. In a concluding volume yet to come, Mr. Runciman will relate the sequel and doubtless draw whatever larger lessons may be had from Christendom's counterattack upon aggressive Islam.

RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY: A History of Modern American Reform. By Eric F. Goldman. *Knopf. $5.00.*

Mr. Goldman's foreword, "in which the author seeks a basis for rapport with the reader," states:

"This book . . . is a history, first and foremost. It is written . . . with an attempt to root the volume in all the relevant research. It aims not so much to declare where we are going or ought to go but to present a narrative, the story of the wise and the shortsighted, the bold and the timid, the generous and the grasping human beings who are the eternal stuff of history."

It should be noted with emphasis that Mr. Goldman has succeeded in producing just exactly what he hoped his book would be—a consistently balanced, highly informative and always readable synthesis of the history of American reform from the late 1860's up to the present time.

MYTHS AND REALITIES: Societies of the Colonial South. By Carl Bridenbaugh. *Louisiana. $3.25.*

This little volume is a minor classic of social history—a penetrating and delightfully incisive analysis of Southern civilization in the period from 1730 to 1776. The title promises that in place of the romantic myths which have passed for history of this "Old" South, the author will present the more complex and more significant realities of history; and his promise is well kept.

This book can be highly recommended to anyone, layman or scholar, who is interested in the South—"Uncle Sam's other province"—of yesterday or today, and the unique variation on Americanism that Southern civilization is.

GEORGE WASHINGTON: A BIOGRAPHY. Volume V, Victory with the Help of France. By Douglas S. Freeman, *Scribner's. $7.50, boxed.*

This volume of Freeman's great biography of Washington carries the story of his career from 1778, through the dark disasters of 1780 and the sunshine of victory at Yorktown in 1781, into the less dramatic but dangerous postwar years when fighting had ceased but peace had not been made. It concludes with the Peace of 1783 and Washington's resignation of his commission as commander-in-chief to Congress.

The final chapter gives Freeman the opportunity to offer one of his penetrating and brilliant summaries of the part that Washington's leadership played in carrying a "seemingly hopeless revolt" to victory and independence. This volume, like the earlier ones, continues to offer the reader massive and detailed research joined with a splendid narrative style—all adding up to the most convincing portrait of George Washington ever made.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. By Benjamin Thomas. *Knopf. $5.75.*

This is the first one-volume biography of Lincoln since Charnwood's. In the light of modern scholarship, Mr. Thomas has given a critical examination and revaluation of every item in the life and legend of Lincoln. The result is an admirable and readable condensation of all available materials which expands, amplifies and corrects our conception of Lincoln on almost every page. Mr. Thomas never exaggerates, never sentimentalizes, and everywhere his love of Lincoln's character and mind shines through. A most excellent book, indispensable for the admirer of Lincoln.

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MIDSTREAM: Lincoln the President, Volume III. By J. G. Randall. *Dodd, Mead. $7.50.*

In the seven years since Volumes I and II of Randall's life of Lincoln were published, the Lincoln papers and several other sources have become available. Volume III shows an awareness of them all and presents a well-rounded picture of Lincoln's world as of the closing months of 1863. There is a reconstruction of Presidential days—the activities, routines and habits of the man who was at once prime minister, commander-in-chief and public functionary. There is the husband and father, with a kinder picture of Mary Todd Lincoln than the familiar one. There is the shadow of the Civil War on every page, but campaigns and military operations are concentrated in two chapters toward the end of the book. And finally, there are absorbing contemporary personal accounts of "this strange, quaint, great man."

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: The Apprenticeship. By Frank Freidel. *Little, Brown. $6.00.*

Frank Freidel, of the University of Illinois, launches an ambitious six-volume life of the late President with a sharply objective and readable study of Roosevelt's years of preparation for his future role, when, "as a key progressive legislator in New York State and as a dynamic subordinate in the Wilson administration," he was storing up "political, administrative, and diplomatic knowledge far beyond his years."

The author has performed for the first time the monumental task of sifting the gold from the dross of tons of Hyde Park papers and other manuscript and archival sources with great diligence, careful judgment and discriminating taste: the result promises to be the definitive biography of Roosevelt.

MONCURE CONWAY: 1832-1907. By Mary Elizabeth Burtis. *Rutgers. $3.50.*

Miss Burtis has written a careful account of the crowded years of Moncure Daniel Conway, the Virginia aristocrat who became an abolitionist, a Methodist circuit rider who became pastor of the liberal South Place Chapel in London, an indefatigable writer and lecturer, champion of a dozen causes, and friend of a host of nineteenth-century notables—among them Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Whitman, Mark Twain, Browning, Mazzini, Carnegie. Conway is remembered today, if at all, as the biographer of Tom Paine; but there is much in the story of his life to hold the attention of anyone interested in the intellectual currents of his time.

Conway was also a warm and engaging personality. Miss Burtis writes, "If I could meet him, I might not always agree with him, but I am sure I would like him and that he would command my respect." She makes the reader like and respect him too.

THE HOLY BIBLE: Revised Standard Version. *Nelson. $6.00.*

The need for a revision of the King James Version of the Bible has been imperative for several decades. On the one hand, the language of 1611 is no longer understood by the common reader; on the other, modern research in textual criticism, ancient philology and Biblical exegesis has cast new light on hundreds of passages which were hitherto obscure or misinterpreted. The present revision is, on the whole, scientifically accurate, but its fidelity to the original has often been achieved at the cost of literary beauty, since too little attention has been paid to English rhythm and euphony.

THE COURAGE TO BE. By Paul Tillich. *Yale. $3.00.*

Based upon the twenty-seventh series of Terry Foundation lectures delivered at Yale University, this small volume presents a scholarly and intricate exploration of the concept of courage in relation to the structure of being. "The courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his existence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation."

Clear, uncluttered thinking and lucid

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writing mark Mr. Tillich's study as a distinguished and readable one.

RUMOR AND REFLECTION. By Bernard Berenson. *Simon and Schuster. $6.00.*

Bernard Berenson has been famous for more than two generations as an art historian and art critic. He has been almost as famous for his conversation, edged, ranging and wise. In a series of entries made during the war, this book reveals the many facets of a mind at once erudite and perceptive. The notations are all the more arresting since they were not written in the tranquillity of peace in the author's own villa. They were made while the writer was in hiding (at the home of a friend) from the Nazis during the Second World War. Amid the rumors he heard, he sets down the reflections he made, not only on the passing tragic events, but on the principles behind them, on the human situation and on deathlessly beautiful things. The result is a rare book.

LETTERS OF EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY. Edited by Allan Ross Macdougall. *Harper. $5.00.*

Miss Millay's letters as well as her verse vividly demonstrate the freshness and sensitivity of her perception and feeling. Even her carefully thought out critical comments have a personal and spontaneous flavor. Her informal and intimate correspondence with her family and friends (among whom were many well-known writers) reveals a loving, generous, vital personality and a dedicated poet.

Mr. Macdougall has annotated this volume with a bare minimum of identifying facts. These letters, dating from her early youth, form in themselves an articulate history of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

ANDRÉ MALRAUX AND THE TRAGIC IMAGINATION. By W. M. Frohock. *Stanford. $4.00.*

This critical study of André Malraux endeavors to dissipate the political fog which has enshrouded his works. Mr. Frohock contends that the confusion about the former "leftist" and now "Gaullist" Malraux stems from the legend which has grown up about him as a man of political action. He challenges the assumption that Malraux's novels are literal biographical reporting, and reveals Malraux as essentially a poet whose subject is the tragedy of man's destiny and his heroic defiance of it. Malraux's inherent tragic sense of what it is to be man transcends his politics.

Mr. Frohock has given a sufficiently detailed summary of Malraux's works to orient the reader unacquainted with the books themselves. Although the writing is at times a bit turgid, his thesis is logically developed, provocative and pertinent.

BERNARD SHAW AND MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL: Their Correspondence. Edited by Alan Dent. *Knopf. $5.00.*

G. B. S. knew very well the special qualities and limitations of this correspondence. It was not just so much Shavian boasting when he said, in a letter in 1921: "Besides, I should play you off your own stage." Yet even though Mrs. Campbell is no match for Ellen Terry as a correspondent, her letters have value in both their human and professional reflections. What is more, she emerges with quite the best description of these letters when she charges him with having ". . . hidden from the world the one thing that would have done it good: Lustless Lions at play." "Stella's" letter to Shaw about his views of Ibsen—"Not one little bit do you understand Hedda"—and "Joey's" "Final Orders" before the opening of *Pygmalion* are the best vein of the book. Shaw's account of the cremation of his mother is fearful and wonderful as a character study. The Shaw collections, the theater collections, the letter collections all must have this volume. Yet of Shaw's two extraordinary epistolary love affairs, this is the lesser. If its flame was hotter, it is only natural that its residue is lighter. His reference to "the imaginary world which is my real world" is the key to his relationships to both these women. Probably we shall never see a letter addressed to Mrs. Shaw.

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STARS IN THE MAKING. By Cecilia P. Gaposchkin. *Harvard. $4.25.*

On the human scale of time, the ways of the stars are majestically slow and measured. On the cosmic time scale, however, there is abundant action and drama. Our old Earth has lived through much of the drama, for the expanding universe is scarcely older than the ancient rocks of this planet's surface. Many of the great stars that dominate our night skies are younger than the Cretaceous dinosaurs.

Mrs. Gaposchkin has sought out the most important of the operations on the stage of the cosmic theater—the operations that produce from the primordial the stars and stellar systems. First she analyzes The Players, next sets The Sidereal Scene, and in the third section plays out The Drama. The treatment is authoritative (a little hard going at times), the printing excellent. And the Epilogue of forty-eight page-size portraits of nebulae, star fields and galaxies is itself worth the price of admission.

COLLECTED POEMS, 1917-1952. By Archibald MacLeish. *Houghton Mifflin. $4.00.*

Archibald MacLeish has always been concerned about his duty as a citizen and his duty as an artist. These poems, collected over thirty-five years, and containing his best long poem, "Conquistador," reflect that concern. The better poems are those in which the artist triumphs. But throughout there are eloquent passages of the harsh and tender ambiguities of love and betrayal, of loyalty to a person or a place. And there are details that make a street visible to the eye, that evoke the sweet winds and the salt, the lights and shadows moving over landscape or seascape.

LIFE ON THE TEXAS RANGE. Photographs by Erwin E. Smith. Text by J. Evetts Haley. *Texas. $10.00.*

These are photographs by one of the outstanding photographers of the cattle range, whose work has been widely scattered and is here published for the first time from a collection of eighteen hundred of his plates and films that went to the Library of Congress after his death. The pictures are grouped to depict camp life, work on horses, cattle in herds—grazing or on the trail—old-time saloon scenes, water holes, and finally a mound of rocks on the open prairie. Not a single woman appears in the eighty-two gravures.

The collection is both a valuable documentary and a beautiful book. The text is brief and admirably explanatory.

ADOBE DOORWAYS. By Dorothy L. Pillsbury. Illustrated. *New Mexico. $3.50.*

Adobe-dwelling, according to Mrs. Pillsbury in these stories of Tenorio Flats—a small area of tranquillity just outside the storm center of Los Alamos—is more than "little golden cubes of houses" and an ever-changing desert backdrop for charming Indian and Spanish-American neighbors. "It is a way of life," a "philosophy and a song."

The drawings by M. J. Davis are in keeping with the simplicity of the individual anecdotes and the escape-on-purpose mood of the collection.

A MANY-SPLENDORED THING. By Han Suyin. *Little, Brown. $3.75.*

This largely autobiographical book, written by a young Eurasian surgeon, tells explicity, honestly and movingly of her love affair with an English newspaperman. But there is much more than a beautiful love story here: the background is Hong Kong, and there are dozens of vivid pictures of Chinese and Eurasians and British, with penetrating discussions of their interrelationships. And there is always China, with communism like a tidal wave rolling over it, while the people in Hong Kong watch, wait or take part in its inevitable advance.

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always timeless things happening quietly in the midst of the contemporary clamor, and one of the pleasures of a good English newspaper is that these quiet events are given proper attention. Some of them are more newsworthy than a Cabinet crisis or a murder. In the *London Times*, if not the *Manchester Guardian*, there is likely to be a letter on the origin of rolled up trouser cuffs or the earliest date a robin was ever spotted in St. James's Park. There will be reflections on Chinese poetry evoked by a cabled report that a Communist-minded Chinese poet has been feted in Red Square in Moscow.

That they offer the news behind the news is the claim made by certain commentators and news weeklies. How delightful a journal could be made up of the news not in the news at all—of items clearly non-crucial, non-urgent but inexpugnably true or interesting or both, true in a way in which the same events would be true in all times and all periods, like Odysseus' dog greeting his returning master, interesting in one of the thousand ways that have nothing to do with topicality. As for comment, there are other things worth commenting on as well as politics, and it would gladden the spirit to see first principles make the front page, the eternal things become spot news.

Myths About Myths

"There are certain myths current about America in Europe," I heard the speaker saying; it was myself. And I found myself wondering later *where* they were current, who I had heard say them, where they came from, how current I knew they were. A remark dropped by a customs inspector here, a dentist there, a bookseller, journalist or professor? There was no doubt whatever about my having heard these clichés, no doubt either as to what they were on the whole: the materialism of America, its new sense of power, its old worship of success, its lack of a sense of the past, its contentment, especially in artistic and intellectual matters, with the mediocre —I had heard enough to justify a lecture on the subject and, thinned out a little, a book.

And yet one knows, in the midst of an epidemic of quarter-truths, that there are people in Europe who are very informed about the United States, and that every year there appear on the Continent and in England admirable studies of our mores, our ideas and our literature. There is some ground for discouragement, however, in the fact that for over a hundred and fifty years now, foreigners have been writing sound books about us, but the myths still persist. Visitors like De Tocqueville and Bryce, Siegfried and Brogan, at one time or another, and others to the very present time have written about us with perception, sympathy and understanding. We need not complain that we have not ever been understood. Perhaps what we may somewhat wistfully sigh about is that those we might expect to understand us, or to take the trouble to do so, do not do so. Not the man in the street, but the man in the study surprises an American by his assumptions about us. I was most shocked during a recent long stay in Europe when asked whom I ever found to talk to in this country about the things that I apparently care about. Now that I am back, sometimes I feel it would be nice if the talk about the things one cares about would die down. Chatter is still chatter, even if it is about the great books.

Egg-Heads, Highbrows, Intellectuals

Part of the residue of the last Presidential campaign is the term "egg-head"—possibly one of the least complimentary of the labels applied to the literate and the reflective, the scholarly and the informed in the long history of the amused or impatient scorn with which the larger American public has liked to look upon its intellectual class. "Intellectual" has never been altogether a complimentary adjective in this country, and the "intellectual" has never, as a noun, strictly connoted praise. For this the intellectuals have themselves, in part, to blame.

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There are among articulate oracles verbal clichés and a snobbishness of learning and vocabulary, and there is an intellectual holier-than-thouness which does not endear the life of the mind (as evidenced by some of its practitioners) to the general public. There is often among literary and academic people a morbid fear of the cliché, a pathological terror of being generally understood, and a herd-like acceptance of a current fashionable jargon, the modish passwords of the current elite.

On the other hand, there is a growing and alarming tendency among even literate readers to identify theoretical reflection with vagueness, and to think contemplation is all one with the vague or the starry-eyed. Words of five syllables sometimes do say what words of one syllable do not. Thinking is not always an affectation (some people really like it), and it is not always, in the long run, as irrelevant as it has become fashionable to think. "Intellectuals" themselves have begun to affect the mucker pose. It is dangerous when a good mind wishes above all things to be one of the boys. Socrates was, doubtless to his cost, not concerned much about that.

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *regularly carries miscellaneous comments by readers on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *Phi Beta Kappa Hall, Williamsburg, Va., and should not exceed 300 words in length except on request. Because of limitations of space, the Editors cannot guarantee to print all letters received. Letters intended for publication in the Summer number should be mailed before April 1.*

—EDITOR

The Root of the Matter

The excellent, thought-provoking article by Raymond English, "Conservatism: the Forbidden Faith," [AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Autumn, 1952] suggests one comment: Is a sufficient distinction made between "conservative" and "reactionary"? I think of the latter as the opposite of "radical," the former as the opposite of "liberal." I felt that sometimes Mr. English used "conservative" when he meant "reactionary."

In one of George Eliot's essays ("A Political Molecule") we find a picture of one Spike, who prides himself on being a liberal, although he was often called a radical, ". . . an epithet which was a very unfair impeachment of Spike, who never went to the root of anything." Today we think of a radical not as one who gets to the root of anything, but as one who uproots everything. He may plant again; but if future generations treat him as he would treat the past, his planting will not produce any crop.

Mr. English touches on "progress" in passing, but implies that it does not exist, as the pendulum swings between liberal and conservative, or, if you prefer, between action and reaction. Just as the Seven Deadly Sins of the Middle Ages were virtues carried to excess, so (as Mr. English points out) liberalism, unless corrected and compensated by a counterbalancing force, destroys not only itself, but the society in which it is operating. He notes a "confused faith in progress" as part of the optimism of the liberal attitude of mind.

Has not the true liberal a bit of the conservative in him? He does not destroy the past because it is the past, but keeps what is good in it; he does not welcome the new just because it is new, though he is not prejudiced against it.

ROBERT WITHINGTON
Northampton, Massachusetts

Philosophical Wishful Thinking

The article by Raymond English on philosophical conservatism [AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Autumn, 1952] is rather vague and unrealistic. History lends little support to his charges and academic distinctions. No doubt there are, at all times, philosophical conservatives, as there are philosophical liberals and philosophical radicals. These are not likely to get appointed or elected to responsible public offices, or to influence the active politicians and lawmakers.

The conservatives in politics and in office are not philosophical, and neither are the editors of major newspapers and periodicals. The philosopher is not interested in "the art of getting the second best," which is politics, as Lord Morley observed. The legislator and minister or head of government is not interested in theory and rigorous logic.

As a rule, the conservatives oppose *all* reforms demanded by the liberals and evolutionary, constitutional radicals. That is a fact, and it accounts for the occasional excesses of liberalism. At what point does liberalism sin against the light of philosophy? Who can claim the authority to answer that question in any given case? Even philosophers and academic scholars disagree. To talk in general terms is not to advance matters which require action.

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What was unphilosophical, unwise, excessive in Gladstonian liberalism, and what was excessive, unwise and unsound in Roosevelt's New Deal? We have the right to ask for bills of particulars in all such cases. There was precious little philosophy in the attacks of the conservatives upon the latter set of measures. Not one of them has been repealed, though some have been whittled down, with little advantage to any social group. Today the Roosevelt laws are called "social gains," and the notion that Roosevelt was a Fascist or Communist is seen to have been ridiculous and malicious. He gave capitalism a new lease on life, and all rational men know that another major depression would mean another New Deal, with more "socialism" and statism. The philosophical conservatives will shake their heads and, of course, command no attention. In the words of John Dewey, progress in social and economic affairs is a retail job. Each step proposed must be discussed realistically and practically, and accepted or rejected on its supposed merits or demerits. This is the way of the world of men and women who are not philosophers and who hardly ever consult Kant, Hegel, Comte or Bergson. As Stalin has said, life has its own logic. Common sense and good will of the kind exemplified by Gladstone, Lincoln and Roosevelt must do.

VICTOR S. YARROS
La Jolla, California

Cited for Temerity

Gerald W. Johnson should be cited for temerity in his attempt to analyze an institution as complex as the American Presidency in eight short pages [AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Winter, 1952-53]. In addition, his reasoning is marred by omissions and poverty of facts.

In the first place, Adlai Stevenson did not object to the candidacy as such, but rather to the "mess in Washington" for which Truman took credit when he stood on his record. Furthermore, Johnson overlooks the lucid and shrewd statement of a neo-States' rights position made by Governor Stevenson in *Look* on June 3, 1952. In view of Truman's aggravation of the South on this score, Stevenson must have felt like "both Democratic candidates"—Truman and himself—as he accepted the nomination, only to see millions of Southern votes fly out the window. Deep down in his heart, Stevenson knew that his States' rights position, combined with the bipartisan support he had there, was his best chance in Illinois, Lincoln's state—far better than his Harvard-New England tie.

W. J. SUCHY
Cicero, Illinois

I Hate Snow

Despite the delightfulness of Mr. Melville Cane's verses, his article entitled "Snow: Theme with Variations" [AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Winter, 1952-53] filled me with gloom; for when it comes to the contemplation of snow, I must confess that I lack both the imperturbability of an arctic Eskimo and the indifference of an antarctic penguin. As a matter of fact, the only snow which I have ever seen during my adult years which failed to annoy me was that depicted on a Christmas greeting-card scene. However, Mr. Cane's article was not entirely fruitless so far as I am concerned, for it has impelled me to appeal to Euterpe, and the Muse of Lyric Poetry has inspired me to pen the following lines:

Raindrop versus Snowflake

Oh Mr. Cane,
Every rain
Gives me a pain
'cept winter rain;
For it is plain
That winter rain
Might have been
Lousy snow.

Although my poem is concededly not in the same class with Mr. Cane's verses, I feel that I too should be permitted to offer a brief exegesis. Note in the first place the simplicity of the meter; the more ponderous iambic pentameter and dactylic hexameter have been studiously avoided in

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order that the basic theme can be presented with a maximum of force and clarity. Precisionists might quibble about the adjective modifying the word "snow" on the grounds of entomological inaccuracy. They might argue, and with reason, that among the infinity of configurations assumed by flakes of snow, none has ever been found which even remotely resembles a *pediculus vestimenti*, a *pediculus capitis*, a *platypsyllus* or a *polyetenes fumarius*. However, when one considers the hapless pedestrian trying to cross the street without having a passing taxicab splash him with slush, the use of the adjective in question appears fully justified. Think, too, of the unhappy millions who must wear rubbers for days on end until a dilatory street-cleaning department removes the snow; the appropriateness and validity of the adjective is then fully established.

One more poem flows from my pen.

Snow

Snow—pfui
I hate snow
Period

In this short poem, the onomatopoeia of the word "pfui" should not be overlooked, for it is the keynote of the entire composition. In this word can be heard the crunching sound of the pedestrians' canes, walking sticks or alpenstocks as they attempt to negotiate the mounds of snow at crosswalks and to avoid the lakes of melted snow in the gutters. Modesty alone prevents me from saying that the entire force and beauty of this poem reside in this single word.

After singing the praises of snow, Mr. Cane ends his article by saying, "Such are the various poems that represent my feeling for snow. Others may follow." This reminds me somewhat of General MacArthur's famous "I shall return" when he left the Philippines shortly after the fall of Corregidor. I trust that I will soon have the pleasure of reading more of Mr. Cane's verses, but let me urge him to choose some pleasant subject such as birds, bees, flowers, children, love, patriotism—in fact, almost anything, but not snow. I think rain should also be avoided; it always leaves the poet open to the criticism that he is all wet.

ARTHUR L. WECHSLER
New York, New York

Implication of Mistrust

Permit a novice in the fight for academic freedom to file a dissent to Willard L. De Yoe's legalistic argument for loyalty oaths in the Summer AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

No critic of loyalty oaths would deny that there exist precedents aplenty for oaths. But Mr. De Yoe would surely admit that not all precedents are good. And the effects of loyalty oaths are, I think, positively harmful to political democracy—which they are presumably intended to preserve.

Legal penalties already exist for positive acts of disloyalty. If oaths are designed to prevent these, they amount merely to a special promise to obey the law. Such a promise gives no extra force to the law; it serves only as a degrading implication of mistrust.

The direct purpose of loyalty oaths, it appears to me, is to make illegal what is not illegal. By threatening perjury action or loss of job, it outlaws membership in the Communist party, although such membership may not have involved any disloyalty at the time. This purpose pressures the loyalty-oath signer to discard opinions which the Communists hold or are likely to hold in the future. It clears the way for the institutionalization of guilt by association.

Loyalty oaths are based on the concept of presumptive disloyalty. An accused must prove his innocence. If Mr. De Yoe is correct in stating that "those who advise against the taking of a loyalty oath may some day, under certain circumstances, be deemed traitors," then I should suppose that the democratic principle of presumptive innocence must be labeled subversive.

NORM GELMAN
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado

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